



WORLD
HUMANITARIAN
SUMMIT



PREPARATORY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

World Humanitarian Summit Regional Consultation for North and South-East Asia

Regional Steering Group
July 2014

INTRODUCTION

9

constituencies

16

countries

691

respondents

The World Humanitarian Summit regional consultation for North and South-East Asia was preceded by an extensive preparatory consultation, which was organized across the region and through which nine constituencies were consulted during May and June 2014 via a combination of workshops, surveys and online discussions.

The preparatory process aimed to collect a broad set of views to enable more animated and challenging engagement in Tokyo.

Further details on the constituencies consulted and methodology of the preparatory consultations can be found in the table below.

CONSTITUENCY	METHODOLOGY	RESPONDENTS
Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT)/ Disaster Management Teams (DMT)	Thirteen (13) HCT/DMT workshops conducted at country level, with discussions guided and feedback submitted following a standard questionnaire	260 ¹
Civil Society Organizations	CSO surveys organized by CSO networks at country-level and coordinated by ICVA and ADRRN at regional level	186
Affected Communities	Community surveys organized by CSO networks at country-level and coordinated by ICVA and ADRRN at regional level	106
General Public	Online consultations on the World Humanitarian Summit web platform	39
Private Sector	A survey, jointly developed by OCHA and Vantage, OCHA's private sector partner, among the regional business community	28
Inter-Agency Standing Committee Regional Network (IASC)	An IASC Regional Network workshop, followed by a survey individually completed by agencies	25
Civil-military Coordination stakeholders	A survey among civil-military coordination stakeholders organized by OCHA	21
Academia	A workshop organized by the Regional Steering Group's academic focal point, and a survey completed by members of the regional academic community	14
Member States	A Member States workshop organized by the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations in New York	12

1. An average 20 member agencies per country was estimated for the HCTs and/or DMTs.

RESPONDENTS



The preparatory consultations covered all 16 countries of the North and South-East Asia region, with almost 700 respondents. The biggest contributors were the Humanitarian Country Teams and Disaster Management Teams (estimated 260 organizations consulted), followed by Civil Society Organizations (186 organizations consulted) and people and communities affected by

disasters and crises (106 communities consulted). Thus, nearly half of the consultations reached the local level. The remaining 139 responses came from governments, the regional humanitarian partner forum (IASC), academia, civil-military coordination stakeholders, private sector and the general public.

INTRODUCTION

While it was not possible to consult everyone, the geographic coverage of the various groups consulted is relatively broad. It is also important to note that while China and Indonesia had the greatest number of responses from organizations or individuals based within their borders, all 16 countries took part in the preparatory consultations through at least one constituency. The following graphics provide an overview on respondents by constituency and country.

Some caveats to the methodology remain. First, the surveys should not be seen as forming a rigorous empirical basis for analysis because the total number of actors per constituency in each country remains unknown and because it was impossible to impose a minimum sample size per constituency. As a result, while the data provided here does not attempt to establish the collective opinion of the entire humanitarian community in the region, it does provide an overview of the broad perspectives of respondents as a contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit regional consultation for North and South-East Asia.

Second, although all seven survey forms used for this analysis had the same structure, they necessarily differed to some extent as they were tailored to each specific constituency. As a result, many questions were comparable and could be analyzed together across several constituencies, while some questions were unique to one constituency and had to be analyzed separately.

Third, while all countries were represented among the respondents, the average number of respondents per country was not proportional, which has resulted in limitations in interpretation of geographic coverage.

Fourth, the analysis of workshop reports and narrative survey questions was a subjective process by nature as opposed to the analysis of quantitative data.

Finally, while the key findings of the survey results have been included in this paper, many other, lesser, findings have had to be omitted. The selection criteria centered on best serving the purpose of the regional consultation in Tokyo and identifying the questions that were most related to the thematic workshops. All of the data from the various surveys and workshops reports has been compiled and can be requested from the OCHA Regional Office for Asia-Pacific at ocharoap@un.org.

The following report has been structured according to the four World Humanitarian Summit themes. The results of the preparatory stakeholder consultation have been presented first, followed by a summary of the areas in which the Regional Steering Group for North and South-East Asia suggests that participants to the regional consultation consider developing recommendations as appropriate. Each thematic chapter concludes with potential discussion questions to support further exploration of the themes.

REGIONAL COVERAGE



* For Civil-Military Coordination stakeholders, military forces from other countries with presence in the region. For academia, anonymous response. For online consultations, responses from outside of the region.

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS BY CONSTITUENCY AND COUNTRY

COUNTRY	Member States	IASC Regional Network	HCTs/DMTs	Civil Society Org	Affected Communities	Civil-military Coordination	Academia	General Public	Private Sector	TOTAL
China	1		20	115	76					212
Indonesia	1		20	20	11		7	3		62
Cambodia	1		20	17	1	1		1		41
Japan	1		20	8		3	3	2		37
Malaysia	1		20	2	10	2		2		37
Myanmar	1		20	3	6		1			31
Philippines	1		20	4	1	2		2		30
Thailand	1		20	1		1		6		29
Mongolia	1		20	1	1					23
Vietnam	1		20	1			1			23
Timor-Leste			20	2						22
Lao	1		20							21
DPRK			20							20
Rep. of Korea			N/A	12				2		14
Singapore			N/A				1	1		2
Brunei	1		N/A							1
Other*		25				12	1	20	28	86
TOTAL	12	25	260	186	106	21	14	39	28	691

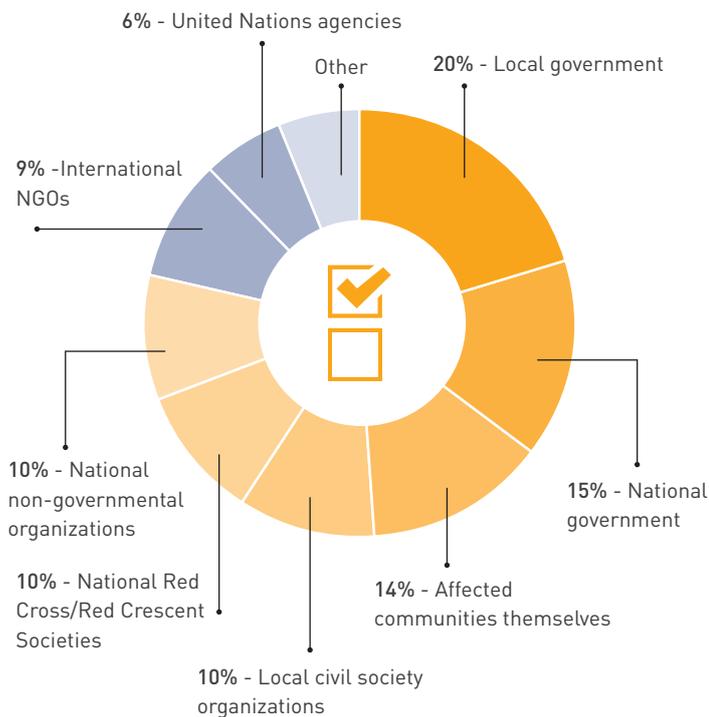
HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

THE PREPARATORY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING KEY OUTCOMES:

Host government leadership: It was acknowledged in both pre-consultation workshops and survey responses that host governments should assume leadership over humanitarian response. In cases where governments' resources or incentives were not adequate, respondents called for capacity support in order for governments to better play this role. Furthermore, formal humanitarian coordination mechanisms were seen as not primarily designed to allow the government to easily engage and lead the response.

Role of national actors and communities: Over three quarters of survey respondents indicated that local and national actors respond most effectively to the needs of affected communities, while only 15 per cent pointed to international organizations. However, workshop participants across the region also noted that affected communities and CSOs are not engaged enough in the planning, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian action.

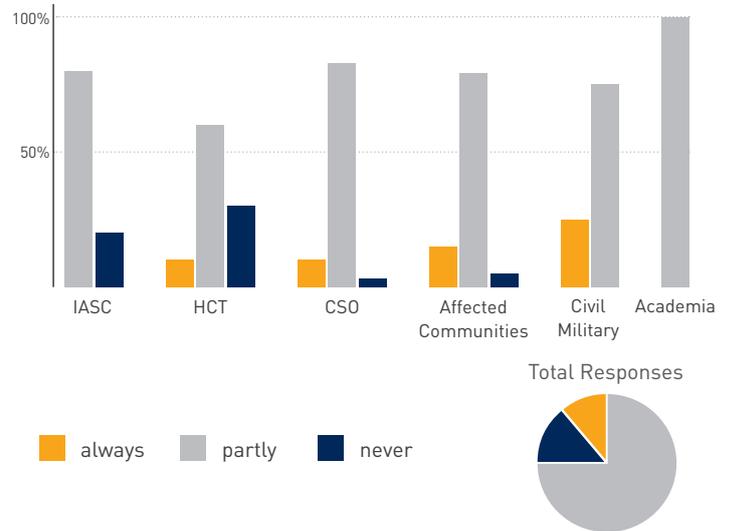
Who responds most effectively to the needs of affected communities in the region?



79% local and national actors

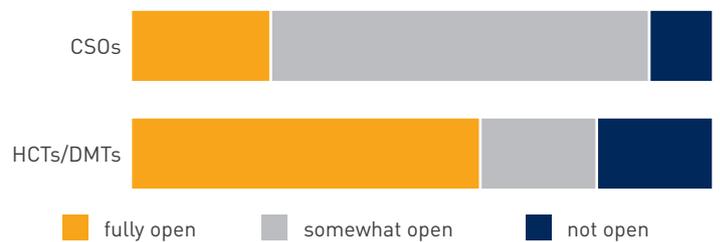
International support: Although respondents pointed to the lead role of governments, and communities argued that local actors respond most effectively to their needs, only 11 per cent of stakeholders indicated that national resources were currently sufficient to cover the humanitarian needs of affected communities.

Are humanitarian needs covered by national resources without support from international partners?



CSO engagement in coordination: The survey findings pointed to CSOs being engaged only to a limited extent in formal humanitarian coordination mechanisms. CSOs identified their main challenges vis-à-vis engaging in coordination as shortages in capacity, including language, technical expertise and human resources (41 per cent), and the lack of information on the cluster meeting schedule (32 per cent). In addition, only 24 per cent of CSO respondents considered formal coordination structures, such as Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and clusters, to be fully accessible to local CSOs. By contrast, the majority (60 per cent) of responding HCTs and Disaster Management Teams (DMTs) felt that these structures were fully open to local CSOs, as seen in the chart below.

Are HCTs/DMTs and clusters open to the participation of local CSOs?



Engagement of civil-military and academic stakeholders: The survey results indicated shortcomings in the current coordination structures with regard to the engagement between civil and military actors and better collaboration with the academic community. Only one respondent from civil-military coordination stakeholders indicated that the HCTs/DMTs always took their advice to guide decision-making and coordination processes. Seventy-five per cent of civil-military coordination stakeholders and 90 per cent of academic respondents indicated they were either not consulted at all or only consulted to some extent.

HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

IASC¹ structure: Workshop outcomes and survey results indicated that the IASC structure, dating back to 1992, was no longer fit for purpose as it did not accommodate appropriate participation of host governments and local communities. Consequently a proposal to restructure the IASC was put forward.

Serving donor interests: The pre-consultation workshops indicated that humanitarian programming appeared to be increasingly top-heavy and oriented towards serving the needs of donors and policy-makers, rather than the needs of communities.

Politicization of humanitarian funding: Some stakeholders noted that many donors' humanitarian funding decisions are intimately linked to their broader foreign policy, which results in increasingly overt politicization of humanitarian action and leaves the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles in question. This was seen to be problematic, in particular where donors were often some of the most influential actors in the current system. The emergence of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was seen as a positive change, having de-linked a portion of global humanitarian funding from the political interests of donors.

Regional bodies: The engagement of regional structures in humanitarian affairs was seen as a positive development in North and South-East Asia. Regional bodies were, however, not seen as formally part of humanitarian coordination mechanisms, despite playing an increasingly important role.

Measuring effectiveness: Stakeholders called for further clarity on what humanitarian effectiveness was and how it should be measured. It was suggested that while there was a need to measure system-wide effectiveness at all levels, humanitarian action should only be deemed truly effective if adequate delivery to affected communities took place. In addition, the measurement of humanitarian effectiveness should include not only the speed of response but also its longer-term impact and the extent to which it addressed chronic vulnerabilities.

Accountability: Stakeholders identified the lack of accountability to affected populations as a weakness of the current humanitarian system. The conversation was seen to take place mainly on the high policy level, and toward donors, whereas practical means to ensure accountability to affected people were seen as lacking.

Context-specificity of humanitarian response: The specificities of natural disasters, conflicts and protracted emergencies were discussed in the pre-consultation workshops. Stakeholders acknowledged the need for humanitarians to use different strategies and tools that are adequately tailored to the needs of these three scenarios.

Based on the outcomes outlined above, the Regional Steering Group for North and South-East Asia suggests the following ideas which may be used as the basis for developing recommendations as appropriate:

- Governments should accept full responsibility for providing humanitarian leadership and strengthening the related technical capacity and human resource requirements that allow them to play this role effectively.
- International partners should support host and local governments' capacity to lead humanitarian response.
- Humanitarian coordination mechanisms, including the IASC, should be restructured to allow for participation of governments, donors, and local CSOs.
- The role of community leaders, community forums and local CSOs should be made central to planning, delivering and evaluating humanitarian response.
- Putting affected people, rather than donors and policy makers, at the centre should be a key priority for 21st century humanitarian action.
- Recognizing and making space in the humanitarian system for civil-military partners and the academic community needs to be enforced.
- Regional organizations should be included in humanitarian coordination, enabled by appropriate support by their members.
- Different tools and approaches are needed for working in natural disasters, conflict situations and protracted emergencies.
- Efforts to raise more funding for neglected humanitarian crises should be enhanced, including by (i) broadening the resource base of humanitarian funding to engage a wider range of contributors, (ii) promoting public awareness on neglected humanitarian crises, and (iii) demonstrating the impact of assistance in meeting the needs of affected communities.
- The Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles should be referenced by donors when making decisions on funding allocations.
- Means of measuring the system-wide effectiveness should be further developed and associated accountability mechanisms should be established.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can host governments best be supported to lead humanitarian response?
2. How can communities and CSOs be more engaged in humanitarian action?
3. How should humanitarian coordination structures and practical arrangements be adapted to better ensure inclusivity and reflect the current humanitarian landscape?
4. How can humanitarian funding for responses that do not attract donors' attention be increased?
5. Do the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles need to be revisited?
6. How can system-wide effectiveness be measured and accounted for?

1. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. The IASC was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. General Assembly Resolution 48/57 affirmed its role as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance.

REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND MANAGING RISK

THE PREPARATORY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING KEY OUTCOMES:

Shifting mindsets: While everyone was aware of the concept of disaster risk reduction (DRR) to at least some extent, the surveys showed that only 18 per cent of respondents consistently consider disaster risk in their programming. The demand for a shift in mindset, from a default setting simply on humanitarian action to give a stronger emphasis to preparedness and risk management was endorsed in both pre-consultation workshops and survey responses.

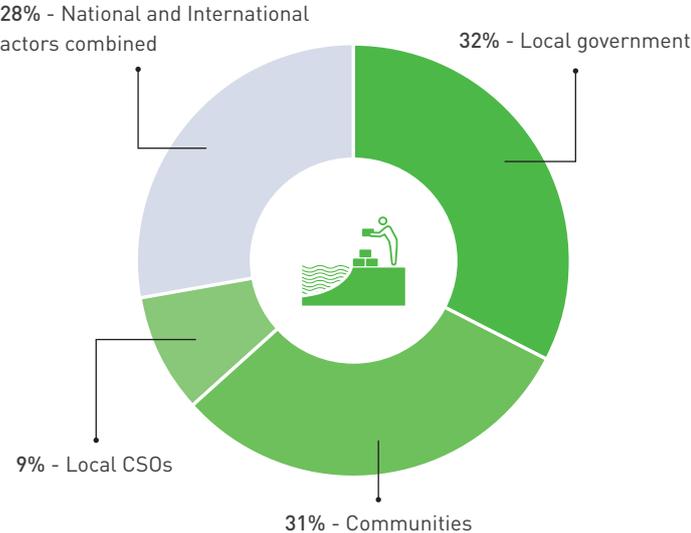
Roles and responsibilities: Respondents expressed a need for further clarity vis-à-vis different stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, given that in addition to humanitarian organizations, also development, military, private sector and academic actors are currently engaged in DRR activities.

Evidence base: The stakeholders called for academia to play a stronger and better coordinated role in developing the evidence base that will demonstrate the value of preparedness interventions.

Role of host governments: While national governments were seen to hold primary responsibility for reducing vulnerability and managing risk in their countries, survey respondents identified host governments' inability to prioritise DRR and enforce relevant laws and regulations as the main cause of increased disaster risk in the region. Stakeholders called for governments to provide more active leadership in this area and prioritize DRR in their policies, programming and funding.

Role of local actors: Over 70 per cent of communities identified themselves, local CSOs and local governments combined as having the primary responsibility to manage disaster risk in their communities, as seen in the chart below.

In your opinion, who has the primary responsibility to manage disaster risks in your community?



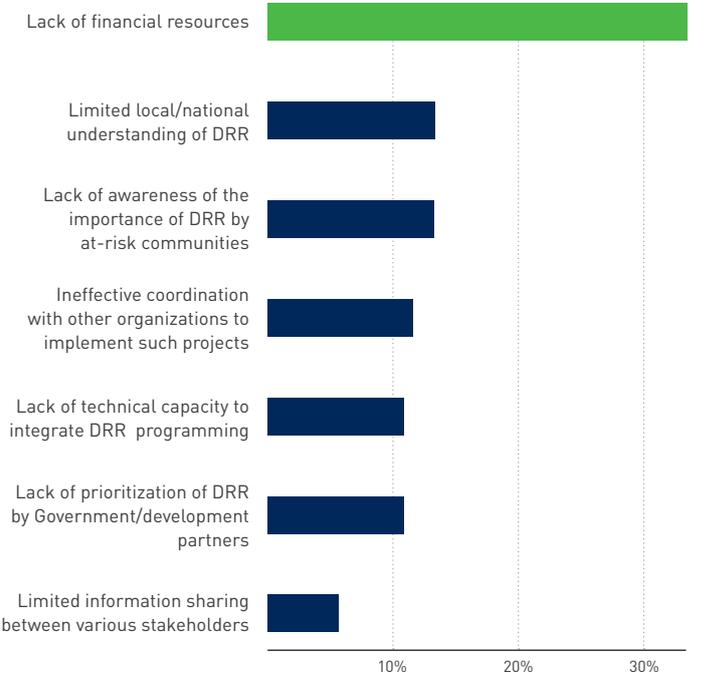
72% local actors

CSO capacity: According to the surveys, local CSOs only implemented DRR programmes and integrated a risk management approach to their existing operations to a limited extent. They explained this as a function of lack of financial, technical and operational capacity as well as limited local and national understanding of the importance of such approaches. CSOs called for capacity building support and additional funding to overcome these obstacles.

Tailoring DRR to local needs: Several stakeholders underscored the importance of tailoring DRR and risk management strategies to local realities. Despite widespread recognition that more attention should be paid to understanding the culture and needs in each location, only five per cent of survey respondents stated that they always consulted local communities and CSOs about the most appropriate ways in which to reduce the risk of future disasters and build resilience.

Funding for disaster risk reduction: Lack of funding for DRR was identified as the main difficulty faced by the respondents' organizations in implementing projects that aimed to reduce disaster risk and build resilience, and as the second largest cause of increased disaster risk in the region. While host governments were seen to hold the main responsibility to ensure adequate funding for DRR, respondents also recommended developing private sector partnerships, for example with insurance companies.

What is the main difficulty in implementing projects that aim to reduce disaster risks and build resilience?



REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND MANAGING RISK

Role of international donors: Several pre-consultation workshops concluded that international donors should recognize risk management as a key priority and allocate more funding explicitly for preparedness interventions. A specific suggestion was put forward for OCHA to create a third window in the CERF focused on funding preparedness interventions, or that new global funding mechanism for preparedness be developed.

Accountability for recurrent disasters: The pre-consultation workshop participants called for the development of accountability mechanisms in cases of recurrent emergencies, such as hurricanes and floods. Despite well-documented risk profiles, there was no mechanism to hold governments and humanitarian and development agencies to account if they failed to address recurrent emergencies in a timely and proactive manner. It was also proposed by some respondents that the IASC should formalize its obligations on preparedness.

DRR in conflict situations: Stakeholders noted the difference between implementing DRR in conflict situations as opposed to other types of humanitarian emergencies.

Link with development processes: Nearly all constituencies mentioned the need for better cooperation between development and humanitarian actors. Moreover, several stakeholders advocated for disaster risk reduction to be integrated into parallel development processes, such as the post-2015 development agenda and the International Conference on Financing for Development.

Based on the outcomes outlined above, the Regional Steering Group for North and South-East Asia suggests the following ideas which may be used as the basis for developing recommendations as appropriate:

- In order to ensure a greater focus on reducing vulnerability and managing risk, a better case should be made for it; for example by carrying out cost effectiveness studies and making sure the results get high visibility, especially with policymakers.
- Given that humanitarian action is only a small piece of the disaster management agenda, a clear set of minimum commitments should be developed to reflect what humanitarians can and cannot do in the field of DRR (similar to the Gender Marker).
- International humanitarian and development actors should help build governments' capacity in DRR, and where needed push for prioritization of DRR by governments in the region, by donors in capital cities and by humanitarian and development organizations in their headquarters.
- Humanitarian and development agencies should support communities' and local CSOs' capacity in reducing risk and preparing for disasters.
- Stronger linkages on disaster risk reduction should be developed between humanitarian and development stakeholders.
- More and predictable funding for DRR is needed, and should be better coordinated by host governments and international donors alike.
- Mechanisms should be put in place to hold governments and humanitarian and development agencies to account if they fail to address recurrent emergencies.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

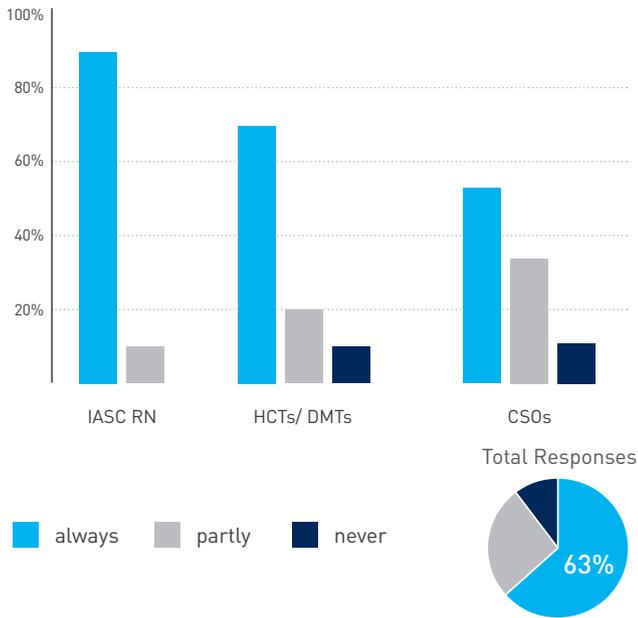
1. How can communities and local CSOs be better equipped to manage new and recurrent risk and reduce vulnerabilities?
2. What steps should be taken to allow host governments to lead efforts toward resilience and reduced disaster risk?
3. How can the linkages on DRR between the humanitarian and development sectors be enhanced?
4. How can additional financial resources be made available for DRR?

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

THE PREPARATORY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING KEY OUTCOMES:

Interest in innovations: There was strong appetite among the stakeholders consulted to explore innovative solutions to improve humanitarian action. Nevertheless, this interest was much higher among international actors than among local civil society organizations.

Is your organization interested in engaging with other stakeholders to find innovative solutions for more effective disaster response?



Engaging affected communities: Several workshops underlined the need to engage affected communities and local CSOs in searching for innovations that are best tailored to local needs. Furthermore, over 80 per cent of community respondents indicated that they could contribute to finding innovative solutions to improve disaster response.

Regional approach: Respondents suggested adopting a regional approach to search for innovations best tailored to local needs. For example, a regional “innovation incubator” could be established and housed within ASEAN or another regional organization.

Collective approach to innovation: Some workshop participants called for a collective approach to innovation, where the primary goal is to improve system-wide effectiveness rather than that of a single organization.

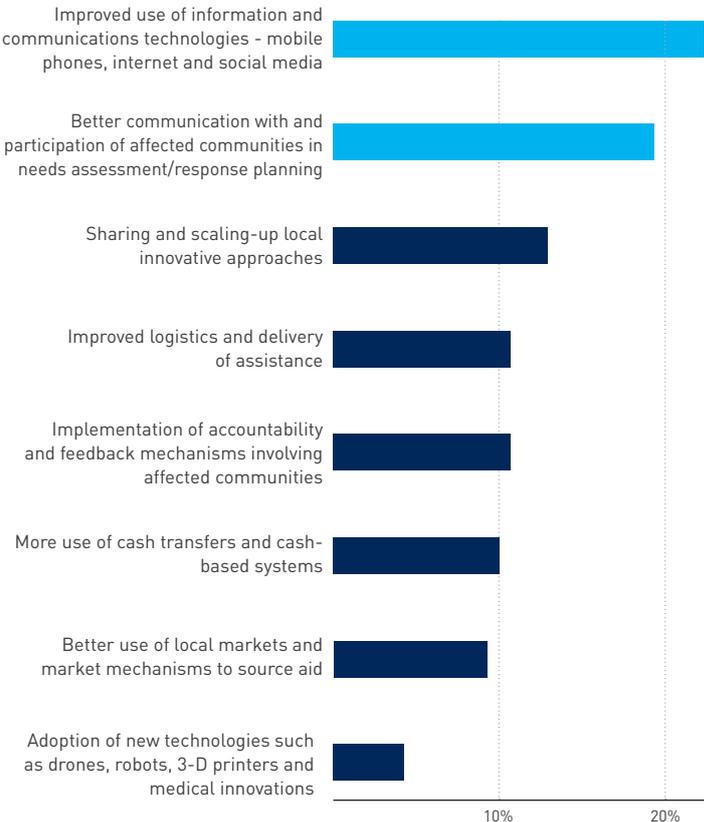
Flexibility and region-specific tools: Stakeholders noted that given the region’s dynamic capacity for self-recovery, humanitarians should adopt more flexible and region-specific approaches to emergency response; for example, adapting coordination mechanisms rapidly in cases where community-level recovery begins before emergency needs assessments had been conducted.

Private sector partnerships: Most workshops reflected stakeholders’ perception that businesses used more innovative solutions and technologies than humanitarians. Enhanced partnerships with the private sector could, according to several stakeholders, allow humanitarians to modify services and processes used by private companies to meet the needs of affected people.

Considering megatrends: Pre-consultation workshops recommended that in order for humanitarians to remain fit for purpose, there was a need to consider the megatrends that affected the world at large, and which included climate change, urbanization and demographic shifts, food price volatility, technological advances, and resource scarcity among others. Furthermore, new potential causes or types of disasters, such as cyber-disasters, could create new needs that the humanitarian community was not prepared for.

Information: When asked what innovations had the biggest potential to improve disaster response, the most frequently selected answers (42 per cent) pointed to improved use of information and communication technology and better communication with affected communities. Moreover, lack of information on needs and gaps in response was identified by survey respondents as the biggest barrier that prevented them from initiating response.

What innovations have the biggest potential to improve disaster response?



Use of mobile phones and SMS: Use of group SMS was suggested by many respondents as an efficient way for real-time data collection. An example of specific innovation in this field was provided by an NGO network, which had opened a mobile group chat during the Typhoon Haiyan response (Philippines, 2013-14) allowing for real-time group information sharing.

Use of modern technology: While workshop participants frequently discussed the need for increased use of modern technology, such as mobile applications, information platforms, unmanned aerial vehicles and mobile devices, the adoption of new technologies yielded only 4 per cent of total responses for having the highest potential to improve humanitarian action.

Cash programming: Several workshop discussions suggested that humanitarians should increasingly adopt cash transfer programming when it made sense to do so, based on market analysis, and work towards aligning such programming with national social services. However, only 10 per cent of survey responses identified it as an innovation that has the biggest potential to improve disaster response, as shown on the previous page.

Retaining and sharing knowledge: Given the high turnover of staff in humanitarian operations, several workshop participants called for better mechanisms for retaining and sharing knowledge and experiences within and between humanitarians.

Based on the outcomes outlined above, the Regional Steering Group for North and South-East Asia suggests the following ideas which may be used as the basis for developing recommendations as appropriate:

- Donors, international organizations, host governments and businesses need to rethink how they can engage with communities and local CSOs in research for innovations.
- Humanitarian organizations should develop partnerships with the private sector to adopt services and processes that might be applied to humanitarian action.
- Humanitarians should consider how megatrends may affect humanitarian needs and response in future, and start incorporating this risk analysis into humanitarian and DRR planning.
- Information sharing and communication, particularly with CSOs and affected communities, should be improved.
- Innovations should be nurtured in the areas of information sharing, knowledge management and communications.
- Humanitarian donors should recognize that the system needs to do research and development work, and that such work will not always automatically lead to the development of new innovations.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How can communities, local CSOs and private sector actors be better engaged in the search for innovations?
2. How can humanitarian processes be made flexible enough to fit into the rapidly changing operational environment?
3. How can information sharing and communication, particularly with CSOs and affected communities, be improved?

SERVING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN CONFLICT

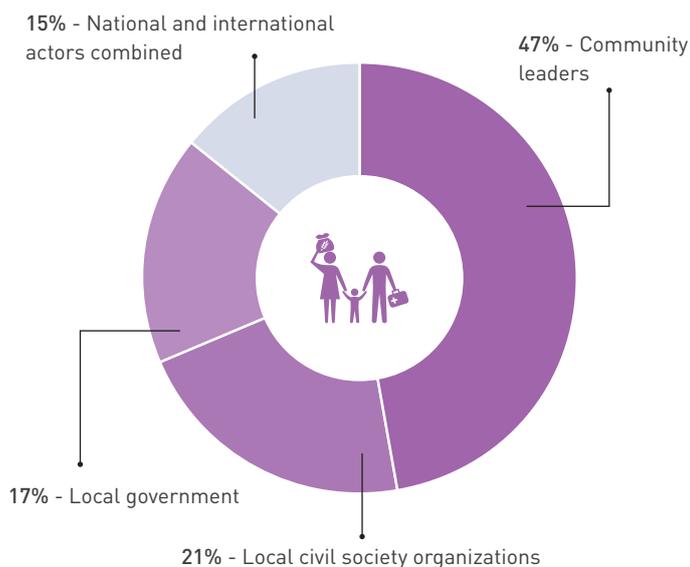
THE PREPARATORY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING KEY OUTCOMES:

Neutrality and impartiality: Most stakeholders identified maintaining neutrality and impartiality, and the perception thereof, as critical for humanitarians in conflict settings. Many argued there was a need for clearer and more coherent strategies for engagement with host governments and parties to conflict.

Roles and responsibilities: There was a clear recognition in the pre-consultation workshops that humanitarian action is profoundly different in conflict situations compared to natural disasters, whether sudden or slow-onset. Against this backdrop, stakeholders called for a clearer definition of various actors' roles and responsibilities in conflict.

Understanding needs in conflict: Many respondents voiced their concern over the limited knowledge base on which to ground their operational decisions, arguing that there needs to be better analysis of the needs of affected people in conflict settings. Both international and local actors emphasized the central role community leaders and local CSOs played in understanding and communicating such needs. As shown below, when communities were asked who understood their needs the most in conflict situations, 85 per cent indicated local actors, including community leaders, local CSOs or the local government, while only 15 per cent pointed to national and international actors.

During a conflict situation, who understands the needs of your community the most?



85% local actors

Conflict analysis: Several actors argued that a better understanding of the roots and dynamics of conflict would lead to more appropriate humanitarian programming. It was suggested that the academic community, local CSOs and interfaith groups were well positioned to support such analysis.

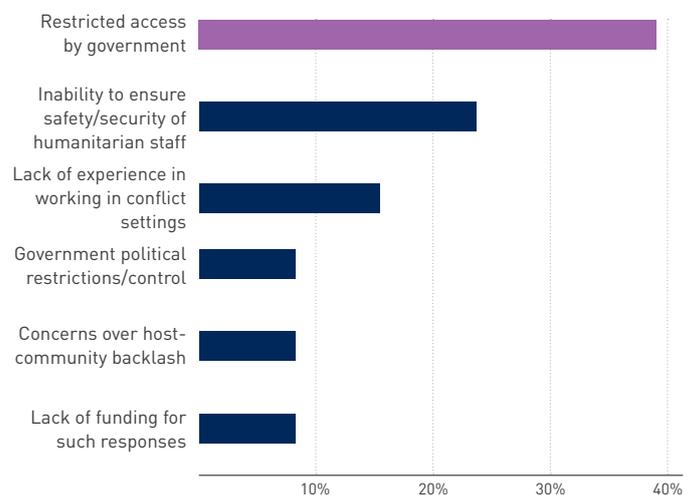
Humanitarian action and peace building: While the central purpose of humanitarian action was not to address causes of conflict, stakeholders said there is a need to clarify the role of humanitarian organizations in peace building.

Regional organizations and conflict prevention: Several stakeholders suggested that regional organizations need to enhance their work on conflict prevention and resolution. The ASEAN Regional Forum was specifically referenced.

Determining host government's role: While it was recognized that, in general, host governments should lead humanitarian response and international actors should play a supporting role, respondents were inconclusive in defining governments' role in situations where they were a party to conflict.

Access: Government-imposed restrictions on access were the most cited reason why members of the IASC Regional Network found it difficult to provide assistance to people in conflict, as shown in the chart below. Several Humanitarian Country Teams similarly voiced access as the key constraint to serving the needs of people in conflict. While local CSOs identified lack of funding as the biggest constraint to their operations, restricted access featured second-highest on their list of obstacles to humanitarian action.

What is the main reason your organization finds it difficult to maintain access and provide assistance to people in conflict? (IASC Regional Network responses)



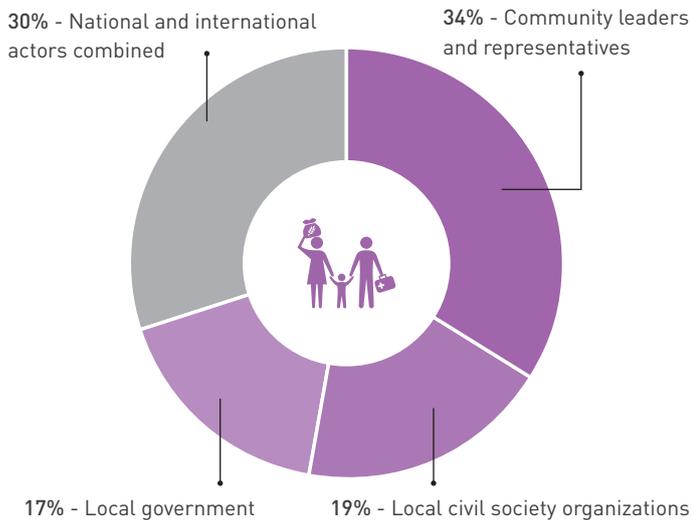
Staff security: Respondents reported concern over their inability to ensure the safety and security of their staff, as well as that of those working with partner organizations. Staff security constraints were identified as the second largest reason hindering the delivery of assistance to people in conflict. While two thirds of IASC Regional Network members had the capacity to ensure their staff's safety, only a fifth of local CSOs reported being able to do the same.

SERVING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN CONFLICT

Support to local CSOs: While local CSOs were identified as being well positioned to serve the needs of people in conflict, particularly in cases where international actors' access was limited, challenges remained in their ability to respond. CSOs identified lack of funding, lack of information about how to engage, lack of capacity, and concerns over staff security as their main barriers in operating in conflict. International actors' and host governments' support to CSOs in these areas was demanded.

Role of communities in responding to gender-based violence: When communities were asked who responded to their needs in cases of gender-based violence, 70 per cent identified community leaders and representatives, local CSOs and local governments combined as the main respondents, as opposed to national and international actors.

If your community is affected by conflict, who responds to the needs of your community if there is Gender-Based Violence?



70% local actors

Partnerships in conflict: Stakeholders suggested that partnerships with businesses, inter-faith groups and other local organizations should be considered in places where humanitarian access and operational capacity may be limited due to conflict.

Based on the outcomes outlined above, the Regional Steering Group for North and South-East Asia suggests the following ideas which may be used as the basis for developing recommendations as appropriate:

- In order to safeguard principled humanitarian action, humanitarians should do their utmost to maintain neutrality and impartiality, and the perception thereof, when operating in conflict situations.
- The issue of humanitarian leadership in conflict should be clarified in cases where the host government is a party to conflict.
- The roles and responsibilities of all actors operating in conflict situations should be clearly defined.
- Humanitarians should draw on the knowledge of community leaders and local CSOs to better understand conflict and community dynamics.
- Humanitarian organizations' role in peace building should be clarified.
- Efforts should be made to eliminate government-imposed restrictions on humanitarian access provided that access is negotiated in accordance with humanitarian principles.
- Attention should be reinforced on humanitarian staff security and local CSOs should be enabled to ensure the safety of their staff.
- In order to improve local CSOs' ability to respond to humanitarian needs in conflict situations, international partners and host governments should offer them capacity support, information about how to engage, and adequate funding.
- Partnerships with businesses and inter-faith groups should be considered in situations where traditional humanitarian organizations' access to affected populations is limited.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How should humanitarians engage with host governments that are party to conflict with humanitarian impacts on the civilian population?
2. How can the needs of affected communities in conflict situations be understood better?
3. How can local CSOs be more engaged in humanitarian action in conflict?

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the preparatory stakeholder consultation provide a different take on what constitute priorities for humanitarian affairs for North and South-East Asia. It is a view in which the main focus is on affected communities; where local civil society organizations are acknowledged as playing an important role; host governments are in the driving seat; and international partners support local actors and facilitate response.

The following four main trends emerged from the consultation.

- 1** First, stakeholders emphasized the ownership of host governments in humanitarian action. Governments' role in leading disaster response and risk reduction efforts should be further strengthened, supported by international actors. Stakeholders called, however, for further exploration of how to work with governments that are parties to conflict.
- 2** Second, respondents identified community leaders and civil society organizations as best positioned to understand humanitarian needs. These actors should be better equipped to communicate local needs and play a more central role in responding to them.
- 3** Third, the importance of collecting, sharing and using information better was underscored. The lack of accurate information about humanitarian needs and gaps in response was mentioned frequently as a core obstacle to serving the needs of people in the region.
- 4** Fourth, the consultation process resulted in recognition of the importance of building partnerships beyond the traditional humanitarian actors. Private sector partnerships were mentioned particularly often, but the potential of the academic community as well as military actors were also noted.

In addition, several lesser but interlinked patterns emerged from the preparatory process and have been introduced in this analysis. While some findings remain anecdotal and are not comparable across the various constituencies, the data collected provides an important information base on the four themes that will be discussed at the regional consultation.

While the narrative above reflects some significant new findings and reflections, some outcomes of the preparatory consultation are predictable. There are many possible explanations. It could be that traditional actors are conditioned by the current humanitarian discourse to repeat well-known mantras and not to question the status quo. Alternatively, the methodology employed for the preparatory consultations might not have allowed everyone involved to have the space to step away from their standard viewpoints and examine the four themes 'out of the box'. Whatever the reason, the participants of the regional consultation in Tokyo should challenge these stereotypical mindsets, constructively engage with the summit themes, and actively propose new solutions that best serve disaster-affected communities in North and South-East Asia.

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