



Global Online Consultation Summary Report

21 September – 9 October 2015

This report summarizes the online comments and contributions received as part of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) global online consultation. The discussion informed the [Global Consultation meeting](#) in Geneva, Switzerland on 14-16 October 2015, which discussed priorities for the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2016.

About the online consultation

The moderated¹ discussion forum provided an open, public forum² to provoke debate and stimulate thinking about how to keep humanitarian action fit for the future, in order to inform the global consultation meeting. Participation in the forum was open to anyone who registered, from any origin or location. **More than 5,265 individuals viewed the discussions and 366 comments were received from 116 individuals from more than 50 countries**, representing a broad range of countries and organizations.³

A total of eight questions were discussed, sparking lively debate around four of the five action areas defined in the [Synthesis Report of the WHS consultation process](#): dignity, safety, resilience and partnerships. The fifth theme, finance, was a recurrent cross-cutting theme throughout the online discussions. Each discussion question focussed on one or more of the [31 major proposals](#) emerging from the consultation process and looked at how the proposals can be operationalized, how local actors can be empowered to take a leading role, and how the proposals can be developed into concrete commitments at the Summit. The discussion was complemented by a new website⁴ where users were invited to select the proposals they believe are most critical to take forward to Istanbul.

Discussion Questions

Table 1: Number of responses received to each question⁵

Questions:	Comments:
PART 1:	
1. DIGNITY: How can we ensure humanitarian action delivers equally for women and girls?	61
2. SAFETY: What political and humanitarian action is needed to ensure that people are kept safe in crises?	78
3. RESILIENCE: How can we build people’s resilience to recurrent and protracted crises?	59
4. PARTNERSHIPS: INNOVATION: How can we leverage the power of innovation to ensure reliable and relevant humanitarian response?	66
PART 2:	
5. DIGNITY: How can we ensure humanitarian action empowers and reaches all people?	30
6. RESILIENCE: How can we increase preparedness and better manage risks, including health crisis risks?	30

¹ The discussion took place at: www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_global, chaired by Aurélie Balpe, Head, IFRC Pacific and moderated by Gabrielle Emery, IFRC Asia Pacific Disaster Law Programme, Malaysia, Gima Forje, TY Danjuma Foundation, Nigeria, Minu Limbu, UNICEF Kenya, Sharon Low, OAMAD, Thailand, Lorena Nieto, UNHCR Colombia, Sorcha O’Callaghan, British Red Cross, UK Emmanuel Roussier, Humanitarian Response Specialist, UNFPA Sub-Regional Office, Kazakhstan, Rabih Shibli, American University of Beirut and Kelisiana Thynne, ICRC, Malaysia.

² The discussion was publicized through a number of channels including the WHS newsletter mailing list, humanitarian and development media and networks including UN agencies and NGOs, through UN Member States, social media and via emails to various humanitarian groups.

³ Comments were received from individuals, national governments, international NGOs, regional institutions, community-based organizations, research organizations, donor organizations and independent consultants, based at headquarters, regional and national offices and in the field.

⁴ <http://voices.worldhumanitariansummit.org>

⁵ Many participants posted more than once and responded to more than one discussion question.

7. SAFETY: How can we ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law in conflicts?	17
8. PARTNERSHIPS: How can we shift leadership of humanitarian action towards local actors?	25
Total comments:	366

Discussion Summary

Detailed summaries of the contributions to the discussion are annexed below in the interim summary and available online [here](#). The discussion engaged a diversity of humanitarian actors inclusive of intergovernmental organizations, private sector, students, national and international NGOs and civil society.

1. Dignity

Part 1 Q.1: How can we ensure humanitarian action empowers and reaches all people, and delivers equally for women and girls, children and youth?

Moderators Emmanuel Roussier, UNFPA Regional Centre (Kazakhstan) and Gima Forje, TY Danjuma Foundation (Nigeria) prompted participants to share their views and experiences on how to operationalise two of the major proposals emerging from the WHS consultation process:

- a) *Close the gender gap by ensuring funding and programming enables women and girls to realize their rights, including protection from gender-based violence;*
- b) *Guarantee protection and education for children, and engage youth as partners in emergency preparedness and response.*

61 comments were received from participants in more than 20 countries. The discussion focused on how the proposals can be developed into commitments at the Summit:

a) Closing the gender gap

HelpAge UK emphasized the specific needs of older women who can be even more vulnerable to violence because of their gender, age and disabilities, and called for dedicated actions and data collection. Discussion Chair Aurélie Balpe, Head, IFRC Pacific Regional Centre (Fiji) suggested that 'dignity' can be preserved by providing appropriate and culturally sensitive assistance, treating people as human beings and ensuring full assistance is given to affected people without controlling how they use it. Other recommendations to operationalize the proposal included:

- Involve women and girls in the implementation of relief activities and in the design of projects specifically targeting women and girls.
- Designate separate information desks and distribution lines to women and girls to ensure they receive assistance first.
- Provide professional skills training to women and girls and support to their business initiatives.
- Ensure women and girls are aware of the services available to them, how to access them and what benefits they can expect.
- Provide sexual and reproductive health education and services for women and girls.
- Understand local priorities and context in combatting gender-based violence.

b) Guaranteeing protection and education for children, and engaging youth as partners in emergency preparedness and response

Several participants supported the importance of school and educational continuity to preserve the dignity of children and their parents in crisis situations, as well as the resilience of their communities. It was further suggested to focus on schools in humanitarian response plans, given that children and young people are

typically good receivers and communicators of humanitarian education, information and communication. Sports were also proposed as an effective means to connect young people.

In order to engage youth as partners in emergency preparedness and response it was recommended to dedicate international funds to involve local youth-led and women-led NGOs organizations in humanitarian action.

c) Ensuring humanitarian action empowers and reaches all people

Discussion Chair **Aurélia Balpe** cited strong calls in the humanitarian system for more resources to reach national and local community-based organization and for local people to be more involved in their own response. Participants' recommendations to operationalize the proposal included:

- Listening to affected people, their needs, expectations and suggestions to ensure humanitarian assistance meets actual needs.
- Involving local organizations in humanitarian action to mitigate local communication gaps, ensure the adequacy of the activities, reduce costs and promote sustainability of the action.
- Where appropriate, provide refugees in protracted displacement situations with temporary employment in host countries, for example to provide local services, such as reproductive health support, assisting people with disabilities, waste disposal services, etc.
- Adopt a **human rights**-based approach to humanitarian action and raise awareness of human rights across affected populations.

“Dignity and equality is key to an humanitarian aid. However, in reality this is not found on the ground in humanitarian aid. The voiceless are not considered much and the less fortunate are not heard. [...] International actors will continue to dominate and at times impose ideas on local actors.” –

Fungai Patrick Nyandima, Research Trust (Zimbabwe)

Part 2: How can we ensure humanitarian action empowers and reaches all people?

Discussion Chair **Aurélia Balpe, Head, IFRC Pacific Regional Centre (Fiji)** prompted participants to share their views and experiences on how to operationalise the following three proposals:

- Empower affected people to take a leadership role, better support first responders and complement local coping and protection strategies wherever possible;***
- Enable affected people to have greater voice and choice, including by increasing two-way communication, cash-based assistance and accountability to affected people and***
- Include the most vulnerable people in humanitarian decision-making, including older people, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.***

53 comments from participants in over 20 countries were received, broadly supporting the proposals and making the following suggestions in terms of their operationalization:

a) Empower affected people to lead, better support first responders and complement local coping strategies:

Participants advocated a massive shift in the humanitarian system from a *“life-saving, basic needs approach”* to a more sustainable, developmental approach, supporting affected people to participate in their own recovery to ensure it is appropriate, meets their needs and endures into the future. Recommendations included:

- Include affected and vulnerable people on local NGO boards to ensure they are given a voice and first-hand perspectives are shared directly.
- Provide continuous preparedness **education** to strengthen people's capacities to cope in crises, to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and support a sustainable recovery, particularly targeting vulnerable groups such as **women**. An example given was community education in disaster prevention and preparedness.
- Ensure the voices of affected people, NNGOs and other Southern actors are included in the WHS.

b) Ensure affected people have greater voice and choice and ensure accountability to affected people:

- To ensure **accountability** undertake independent monitoring of affected people's experiences of humanitarian response and reorient the incentive systems that shape donor programming to encourage staff to listen to and respond to affected people – shared by Plan International from the report “Who’s Listening” (available at: www.plan-international/org/aap).
- Ensure cash-based assistance programmes enhance the capacity of the communities and affected people's dignity by ensuring they are part of “people-centred” modalities of aid delivery, such as cash for work or block grants for community initiatives in crisis settings.
- Prevent **corruption** by training staff, including local staff and affected people - corruption was highlighted by several participants as a major challenge in humanitarian assistance, with Transparency International sharing an [e-learning course](#) developed in collaboration with IFRC which aims to train humanitarian staff to help prevent corruption.
- Meet women and young peoples' sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs, particularly during crises, including providing and ensuring access to SRH services, providing services and addressing stigma about SRH services, including among humanitarian responders.
- **Communication** with affected communities is critical - IFRC sharing a useful definition: “Communication that aims to save and improve lives through the provision of timely, relevant and accurate information and support an environment of transparency and accountability by creating feedback mechanisms.

c) Include the most vulnerable in humanitarian decision-making:

- Listen to and involve affected people *from the very beginning* in decision making, project implementation and future programming and establish responsive reporting, complaint and feedback mechanisms.
- Shift the focus to ensuring affected people are themselves able to access humanitarian protection, assistance and services, including by putting more emphasis on mass communication and using local information channels to share and receive information.

2. Safety**Part 1: What political and humanitarian action is needed to ensure that people are kept safe in crises?**

Proposals for discussion:

- Ensure that humanitarian actors can engage in effective dialogue with all parties to a conflict, and respect principled operational policies and practices.***
- Strengthen humanitarian response that enhances the safety of affected people through greater accountability of humanitarian leaders for protection outcomes.***

Moderator **Lorena Nieto, UNHCR Protection Unit (Colombia)** prompted participants to share their views and experiences on how to operationalise the two proposals. 67 comments were received from participants in more than 19 countries. The discussion looked at how the proposals can be developed into commitments at the Summit with participants agreeing on the need to strengthen: i) compliance with humanitarian principles in high risk areas; ii) prioritization of humanitarian response over political interests; iii) communication channels and technological resources to help identify humanitarian needs and protection gaps; and iv) effective response to groups with special protection needs.

The discussion looked at the sensitive issue of tensions between political agendas and humanitarian response in high risk areas, restricting the capacity of intervention, response and impact of humanitarian workers, with implications for accountability and leadership. Participants shared their concern over the lack of political will and weak compliance with international protection instruments which reduce the effective impact of actions to mitigate potential threats against civilians.

Participants agreed that safety requires accurate and timely information, transparency from all parties and accountability, particularly from high-level humanitarian leaders. These can all be compromised by: manipulation of the information by political interests; lack of technical capacity in field teams; lack of information systems and networks; and reduction of the humanitarian space. Participants argued that participation of affected communities is crucial to improve the effectiveness of any intervention in high-risk areas. Communities have developed their own protection mechanisms, have direct understanding of the risks and know how to reduce the impact; acknowledging this is essential to conducting a “Do No Harm” response.

The discussion highlighted the critical need to prepare field teams to face security challenges, both to themselves and to affected people. Participants suggested that in all sectors, all teams in reduced safety areas require training in protection as a cross-cutting issue in humanitarian response. Donors have a key role in guaranteeing that all interventions, programmes and projects include indicators on the impact on safety and protection issues, based on specific initiatives such as ‘Human Rights up Front’ (HRuF). This requires a transition towards a sustainable response and improved living conditions for the population as a continuation from humanitarian assistance. War remnants are also a key element in the definition of the response, not only to avoid incidents and accidents but to comply with the requirement of guarantees of non-repetition.

Regarding specific needs, women and children, as well as the elderly, were highlighted as neglected and at a higher risk. Sexual violence and use and recruitment were raised as specific threats in areas where armed groups are working to ensure their military capacity without consideration or respect for international prohibitions.

Part 2: How can we ensure respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) in conflicts?

Proposal for discussion:

- *Ensure respect for IHL and other relevant international law in conflicts.*

Moderator **Kelisiana Thynne, Regional Legal Advisor for South East Asia, ICRC (Malaysia)** summarizing the discussion stated, “Armed conflict of every kind brings extraordinary suffering to individual human beings. The

SAFETY - Key recommendations:

1. **Strengthen advocacy strategies** of humanitarian leaders and ensure effective communication with all parties involved in conflicts - accountability determines the prevalence of humanitarian response in global agendas, especially when conflicts are related to global political and economic agendas.
2. Include **specific indicators** to improve safety conditions and reduce existing protection gaps in donor requirements for humanitarian organizations in all sectors of intervention. Linkages between humanitarian assistance and development are needed to avoid protracted situations that reduce communities’ capacities to re-establish their lives and livelihoods.
3. **Improve information systems** and channels, direct communication between communities and humanitarian actors through social platforms and apps, design and disseminate good practices in technological mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response and safety conditions. **Social Media and technology** are powerful tools that can either contribute or compromise effective response to communities in high risk areas.
4. **Protection training to field teams**, especially in high risk areas. Teams in all sectors and areas of expertise need to use a protection approach so as to avoid new risks and exposure of the teams and of affected people, and jeopardizing the humanitarian space.
5. **Ensure education provision** as a long term investment to tackle structural causes and improve global respect and compliance with humanitarian principles. It is also a powerful tool for advocacy in the quest for a middle ground between politics and protection.

desire to protect and assist the suffering human person in armed conflict is the source of humanitarian action. The principle of humanity has inspired the long development of IHL which recognises that war has limits and people should be spared from suffering as far as possible, both combatants and civilians. This consultation thread looked at how people can further be protected from the effects of armed conflict - how IHL protects civilians, protects humanitarian workers, protects other actors in that environment and how we can reinforce and strengthen compliance with the existing legal framework around protection of all people affected by conflict. Indeed, all those contributing to the discussions considered that IHL remained relevant – they all recognised that promotion and enforcement of IHL remained the key to protecting civilians and others affected by conflict.” The recommendations which arose from the discussions were:

1. **Commitment to the existing legal frameworks for ensuring safety for civilians and others in armed conflict such as international humanitarian law and human rights law:** Meeting IHL obligations on the ground is the best way to increase protection in armed conflict. The Summit must reaffirm the fundamental character of obligations and entitlements in IHL and acknowledge that in IHL, the parties to the conflict (both States and non-state armed groups) have the primary responsibility to ensure the protection and welfare of those under their control. One contributor from **Kenya** said that, “*law is non-negotiable*” and that “*States [should be reminded] of their primary role of protecting its citizens and ... this [should be] well documented in the country’s key strategic documents.*”
2. **Commitment to prevent IHL violations:**
 - a. **Education** was recognised by most contributors as very important in preventing violations of IHL. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was highlighted as an important player here which already provides training courses on practical issues such as first aid, but also on IHL.
 - b. **Young people as advocates** - A volunteer from the **Bangladesh Red Crescent** noted that young people are the leaders of tomorrow and should understand IHL.
 - c. **The role of the media** in improving people’s understanding of the law and the conflicts in the world was also highlighted.
3. **Commitment to address IHL violations when they occur:** A contributor from **Christian Aid, UK**, said: “*By holding perpetrators accountable, grave violations of IHL will end because military forces will think twice before bombing a hospital, if they know they will go to jail. Moreover, humanitarian workers and civilians will be more protected in the future and there will be more chances to end conflicts by restoring justice and by ending victims’ resentments.*”

The second part of the discussion looked at the concrete actions and initiatives that could be taken to operationalize this proposal and the commitments at the Summit including the following:

1. **Commitment to the existing legal frameworks:**
 - a. **A code of practice for all states** as to how they would enforce and implement existing IHL was proposed by a contributor from **India**.
 - b. **Integration of international law into national law** so it would be fully enforced was proposed by a contributor from **Sudan**.
2. **Commitment to Prevention of IHL violations:**
 - a. **IHL training course in military training and to non-state armed groups** - one contributor from **Kenya** suggested that all countries should integrate IHL into existing training. She proposed that it is important to engage with all warring parties and not exclude any of them, so as to better promote IHL, especially when peace mediations are being undertaken.

- b. **Conflict sensitive programming that involves an ongoing IHL education programme** to the conflicting parties and targets the village, religious and traditional elders who are involved in community customs and laws, can ensure that everyone understands and respects the law better. Communities at risk of facing IHL violations or of perpetrating violations should be identified and we should work with them towards mitigating these risks through developing their own capacities.
3. **Commitment to Address IHL violations when they occur:**
- a. **Monitoring conflicts** was considered of great importance by contributors, to ensure there is an independent assessment of how the conflict is being conducted, and an ability to address violations immediately.
- b. **Special mandate holder for the protection of aid workers - Pauline Chetcuti, Action Contre la Faim (France)** suggested that in particular to protect humanitarian workers from attacks, all UN member states could ask the UN Secretary-General (or UN Security Council or Human Rights Council) to appoint a special mandate holder for the protection of aid workers who could be mandated to ensure that all cases of violence against aid workers are brought to justice, report on attacks against aid workers, work with states to strengthen domestic legal protections, function as an advocate, as a resource and as recourse for all aid workers in case of violence against them and raise awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles globally. This mandate holder would need to be independent and neutral and have the consent of states to talk to non-state armed groups as well as government militaries.
- c. **Re-establish or create an independent IHL monitoring body** - In order to address violations of IHL in current conflicts, a contributor from the **UK** proposed the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry, specialized in IHL, whose responsibility would be solely to follow very grave cases of violations of IHL and to ensure that correct procedures are followed to bring perpetrators to justice. It was agreed that an independent monitoring body should be re-established (i.e. the International Humanitarian Law Fact Finding Commission under Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions) or created. The problem of NGOs collecting evidence to support such a commission, at the same time as their protection and assistance activities, was highlighted with the concern that if they do so, their employees (particularly local staff) could be at risk of reprisals from the warring parties. Such NGOs supporting an independent monitoring mechanism should be able to be distinguished from principled humanitarian protection and assistance NGOs. However, the diversity of humanitarian actors in armed conflicts will persist and its variety should be valued and respected and all such humanitarian actors should also be protected from attack.
- d. **Truth and Reconciliation Commissions** - Another contributor from the **UK** suggested that these can be *“a tool that helps a peaceful transition”* adding, *“A strong, defined, accessible national level legal/judicial framework to acknowledge, air and address human rights abuses clearly provides some level of justice for victims, and could be key for addressing and confronting the root causes of the conflict/abuse in the first place.”*

3. Resilience

Part 1: How can we build people’s resilience to recurrent and protracted crises?

Proposals for discussion:

- a) **Examine a “refugee hosting deal” for countries and communities hosting refugees;**
- b) **Ensure protection and assistance to internally displaced people and find durable solutions; and**
- c) **Address the humanitarian dimensions of migrant and refugee movements and ensure respect for the human rights of all people on the move.**

48 comments from participants in more than 15 countries were received. Summarizing the discussion, moderator **Prof. Rabih Shibli, American University of Beirut** stated, “Recurrent and protracted crises are subjecting millions of refugees worldwide to traumatic experiences which are overwhelming host communities with unprecedented effects. Seismic crisis-waves are causing the rise of tensions among affected groups to alarming levels, which necessitate bridging the gaps between ‘strategic’ relief and ‘proactive’ policies. Resilience is under discussion at a time when the plight of refugees and migrants continues to make international headlines. With a combined population of more than 60 million, the world is now witnessing an emerging nation of refugees. Capacities in host countries are reaching their limit, and refugees have no options but to seek safety further afield. Large communities are being radically divided in response to the unprecedented influx of refugees, and legal frameworks are being adjusted to accommodate or to reject asylum seekers.”

Many participants’ comments focused on response to the growing refugee crisis in Europe, and consensus on two key measures was notable: **(1) Enhancing Humanitarian Operations, and (2) Reforming International Diplomacy**. Accordingly, the moderator noted, “it is imperative to effectively and adequately **address the root causes** of protracted crises; from destitution and extreme economic disparities, to natural disasters and armed conflicts. In-depth understanding of the complex dynamics that govern recurrent crises is a prerequisite to enabling sustainable solutions that are based on **transparency and upholding human rights’ values**. Perpetrators and violators should not be allowed to finance relief operations. These values become deformed in severe scenarios where refugees’ perception of the ‘other(s)’ is subjected to traumatic experiences. Integrating concepts of **tolerance in education** is an effective paradigm to overcome the cycles of prejudice, exclusion, and violence among radically polarized communities, and allow recovery to spread steadily. This process is nurtured by **empowering targeted communities** with prospects to challenge the pressing circumstances, and to pave the way to restructuring chaotic environments, by **tailoring resilience-building mechanisms to local scenarios** in order to reduce dependency on international aid. **Vocational training** that is contextualized to give refugees a competitive edge, can reverse the notion of them being regarded as a burden to that of being of added value in places of refuge and following their safe return.”

Resilience – key recommendations:

1. **Need to effectively and adequately address the root causes of crises.**
2. **Transparency and upholding International Humanitarian Law** - crucial to addressing the root causes and to protecting affected people.
3. **Focus on education** to help end entrenched cycles of violence and damaging ideologies, in both regions of protracted crises and refugee settlements.
4. **Empowering communities to lead efforts** and involve community leaders in all aspects of programming.
5. **Provide support to people enduring protracted displacement** including information, psychological support and redress.
6. **Tailor resilience-building mechanisms to local contexts.**
7. **Recognize the needs of all**, including vulnerable groups such as migrants to ensure access to assistance.
8. **Provide vocational training** and a focus on innovative education to build self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on external support.

Part 2: How can we increase preparedness and better manage risk, including health crisis risks?

Proposals for discussion:

- a) *Increase government investment in reducing exposure and vulnerability, and disaster preparedness.*
- b) *Increase the predictability of response in advance by forging preparedness and response agreements for natural hazards between governments and the international community.*
- c) *Scale-up social protection measures by governments and development partners in crisis-affected*

areas.

d) Improve management of health crisis risks by governments and international actors.

51 comments were received from participants in more than 19 countries globally. The discussion looked at how local actors and affected people can be enabled to take a lead in building resilience, with the following recommendations shared by participants:

1. **Decentralize coordination and simplify processes:** In addition to ensuring training initiatives are tailored to people's needs, decentralized coordination could also provide better support for and linkage with the community level. To encourage community participation, simplify processes and mechanisms.
2. **Engaging beneficiaries in the funding process** from inception to mobilization and deployment to ensure accountability and transparency. A new model proposed aims to “empower beneficiaries, develop local inclusion and support resilience enabling programmes” through conditional value transfer using cryptocurrency utilizing the Bitcoin protocol (and not money).
3. **Preventing corruption:** To manage risks, it was proposed for organization staff to learn how to prevent corruption in humanitarian aid. Corruption has wide-ranging effects on the vulnerable and victims of natural disasters and civil conflicts. Its impact goes beyond financial consequences and risks affecting the perception of neutrality and impartiality.
4. **Scaling up social protection through engagement of multiple stakeholders** including donors, government, school management, parent committees, private sector and small farmer groups, to address nutrition, universal primary education, and gender equality in education.
5. **Establishing preparedness understanding between governments and the international community:** In partnership with governments, academic institutions and NGOs, prepare for effective response by (i) providing training and response equipment to local government units; (ii) establishing disaster operations centres and evacuation centres, (iii) put in communications protocols and equipment, (iv) assessment tools to identify and analyse the community's capacities and vulnerabilities, (v) increase public awareness of hazards within the community through information, education and communication (IEC) materials for their constituents. IEC materials usually include information on the existing disaster risk, (vi) address specific risks in the community through community-driven initiatives such as planting mangrove propagules to protect coastlines against extreme weather and erosion, and (vii) climate change adaptation initiatives to ensure food security.
6. **Response agreement with network of disaster response facilities:** Launch preparedness programmes by establishing a decentralized network of disaster response facilities with stockpiles of relief items, operational support equipment, and develop response options including in-kind food assistance and cash or voucher transfer applying benchmarks and pre-disaster agreements to ensure timeliness and provide clear triggers for WFP support to government.
7. **Activating early preparedness and response through early warning:** Mitigate and manage risks by translating early warning into early action, as a way to strengthen community, government and regional organizations' capacities to prepare for early response, and recover from climate-driven shocks. This could be through triggering early action based on climate forecasts at the community level up to six months before a drought or period of high risk of flooding. Developing SOPs that lead to preparedness actions and putting in place a working system with cost effective measures.
8. **Basic packages of care in emergency context for local health service providers:** Outline basic packages of care for various diseases and conditions that are seen in natural disasters in a certain geographic area. Involving health staff themselves in defining the care packages, and how they would be implemented in

a crisis setting, is important. This kind of capacity building should be ongoing to help build the resilience of the HSPs to respond to the health needs arising from crises.

9. **Gender analysis and mainstreaming in times of crisis:** Gender analysis is critical to the effectiveness of approaches and to ensure that marginalized or disadvantaged groups are not further marginalized during times of crisis. Preventative measures - in disaster, health, livelihoods and social protection - all have gender-specific dimensions that must be brought up front in all approaches.
10. **Coordinate and cooperate through established platforms:** Humanitarian actors implementing DRR/CCA interventions of any kind at national and local level must be engaged in coordination platforms to reduce duplication of efforts. This should continue beyond relief and early recovery phase to also include the recovery phase.

Participants also made a number of suggestions of actions to be taken in advance of the Summit to implement some of these proposals, which may require concrete commitment at the Summit:

1. **Acknowledge resilience as the bridge between humanitarian and development:** Resilience is an approach to bring humanitarian and development actors to the same platform to work together. More dialogue is needed to define the allocation of resources for humanitarian, resilience and development needs; as well as the level of compromise (if any) of the principles that distinguish the identity of humanitarian and development actors. Participants also questioned whether there is a need to look into a different governance system for such “hybrid actors”.
2. **Need to streamline the multiple messages and agenda within the same sectors:** Disaster management was cited as an example where conferences and summits each focused on different agendas, ranging from community resilience, to preparedness, to early recovery and Build Back Better - all very different concepts and frameworks. Streamlining is needed to support governments to understand and implement strategies and/or plans established during the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action and 2015 Sendai Framework for DRR. Without this, national strategies for disaster preparedness and management risk being broad and vague with limited resources and political will to ensure implementation.
3. **Acknowledge that investment should be extended beyond just government systems in protracted sub-national conflict situations:** There is a need to invest in local and/or informal coordination mechanisms to complement national/regional networks. Such investment should be targeted at network development instead of specific organizations to avoid harming the community. Understanding these dynamics should inform disaster preparedness and managing health risks, including local surge capacities.

4. Partnerships

Part 1: How can we leverage the power of innovation to ensure reliable and relevant humanitarian response?

Proposal for discussion:

- ***Stimulate and leverage innovation to face new challenges and better meet affected peoples' needs.***

The discussion looked at how different stakeholders, including civil society, can operationalize this proposal, and in particular enable local actors and affected people to take a lead, and considered the constraints and how they can overcome. Moderator **Minu Limbu, UNICEF (Kenya)** highlighted the following key recommendations emerging from the discussion, inline with the WHS Consultation Process Synthesis Report:

1. **Rights holders (boys, girls, women, men and elderly) and community-driven innovations:** There was a unanimous call from all participants to recognize rights holders (boys, girls, women, men and elderly

affected by a crisis) as key partners in humanitarian action, as well as key sources of local innovations. Research clearly shows that women, boys and girls are the most affected during crises. **Laurie Noto Parker, Global Public Health, Ipas (USA)** recommended recognizing, *“Girls and women as resources and resilient first responders”* not just recipients of humanitarian assistance, adding, *“We need to build on the traditional and indigenous response mechanism embedded in the local structures”* so that community and community-driven solutions become the main source of social learning for improving humanitarian interventions.

2. **Innovative Partnerships: Jacopo, Senior Advisor for Humanitarian policy, Christian Aid (UK)** shared his NGO’s research on “Keeping the faith” which highlights the positive role **faith-based organizations** played during Ebola response with key focus on *“locally-owned responses to emergencies”*. Similarly, to foster humanitarian innovations, **Jacky Aligula, Partnership Specialist, UNICEF (Kenya)** and **Rob Beyer, Chairman, Vilgro Innovation (Kenya)** highlighted the importance of engaging with the private sector before, during and after a crisis. Jacky recommended the **‘Child Rights Business Principles’** (UNICEF and Save the Children) as providing a bridge between the private sector and the humanitarian community. At the same time, there is a *“language barrier”* in terms of what the **humanitarian community and private sector** wants; hence, Rob noted, *“as progress is made to bridge the “language/cultural barrier” between the private sectors and humanitarian entities, more innovative ideas will, indeed, flow”*.
3. **Local and national leadership and responsibility: Syed Harir Shah, President, JAD Foundation (Pakistan)** shared a series of lessons learned from the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, where the GIZ-supported disaster preparedness and management project devised a practical application of a comprehensive, integrated disaster risk management system, developed, implemented and operationalized by multi-sectoral organizations. He added that *“district and Local Government agencies must **promote and strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances building across sectors and disciplines at all levels for strengthening community resilience**”* and through community engagement address the *“weak coordination and communication system between different levels of the administrative structure and involved stakeholders”*.
4. **Data:** Almost all participants highlighted the need for structured **investment in collection, processing, analysis and sharing of disaggregated data** to support evidence-based humanitarian action, *“I would strongly recommend that any form of data collection ensures it looks at data across all ages”* advised **Prafulla Mishra, South and East Africa Regional Director, HelpAge. Pricilla, Disaster Risk Reduction (Kenya)** challenged the operational humanitarian agencies including OCHA to improve the current humanitarian data sharing practices in order that, *“different pieces of the humanitarian work interconnect thus building a system that allow triggering of actions to the next level based on learning from the previous one”*.
5. **Scaling-up/Academic Institutions:** All participants argued that a suitable platform/mechanism should be established to leverage resources to support research, development and scaling up of new ideas. **Robert Akou, MedAir (DRC)** added, *“the power of innovation should definitely be correlated with the type of crisis and innovation must be accompanied by a training and prompt practice. The best way to take advantage is to share the results of innovation in various forums”*. **Boniface Akuku, Information Management and Communication Technology, Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (Kenya)** shared that the link between knowledge management, research and actual practices around the impact of innovation are very weak. With nearly half of the global population under the age of thirty, **Norah, Academic Partnerships Specialist (UNICEF)** added that, *“universities are also excellent hubs for convening interdisciplinary thinkers and stakeholders ranging from private sector to government”*. **Tonny Omwansa (Nairobi Innovation Week) (Kenya)** shared a good example where the “link” is already happening through the common platform of [Nairobi Innovation week](#).

How can we amplify Bottom-up Humanitarian Innovations?

Participants agreed that more needs to be done to amplify ongoing bottom-up approaches to leverage the power of innovation for humanitarian action. Participants shared a number of innovative best practices that already exist that address the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly in locations where it is needed most. The following are two of several examples shared:

- **[Kenya Inter-agency Rapid Assessment Mechanism \(KIRA\)](#)**: **Berryl Ondiek, Information Management (Kenya)** highlighted this award-winning humanitarian decision-support tool as an “*innovative approach from Kenya that has supported effective and efficient humanitarian response through humanitarian partnerships*”. The mechanism is partnership-based, collaborative and government owned and received the award for ‘Outstanding Humanitarian Impact’ at the Humanitarian Technology Conference: Science System and Global Impact 2015, Boston. More details at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/kenya-inter-agency-rapid-assessment-mechanism-kira-bottom-humanitarian-innovation>
- **[Start Labs: Fostering innovation in the humanitarian sector](#)**: **Michael Mosselmans, Christian Aid (UK)** made a strong case for **enabling Southern NGOs to take a key leadership role in fostering innovation**. He shared this ongoing NGO-led initiative which provides financial support to NGOs to identify, test and develop new humanitarian solutions.

Part 2: How can we shift leadership of humanitarian action towards local actors?

Proposal for discussion:

- *When possible, shift leadership of humanitarian action towards local actors, national institutions and regional cooperation, with the international humanitarian community taking a support role.*

Moderator **Sorcha O’Callaghan, Head of Humanitarian Policy, British Red Cross (UK)** prompted participants to share their views and experiences on how to operationalise the proposal. 25 comments from participants worldwide were received. **All contributors supported a shift towards national actors**, with different areas emphasised. One part of the discussion focussed on **trust**, highlighting the power imbalance and perverse incentives inherent in the current system which supports the *status quo*. Some contributors suggested a need for a better evidence base; others highlighted the need to build on practical solutions that are already under development. Many emphasised the **critical role that local and national actors undertake**, including in first response but also in ensuring more contextually-relevant response. **Tackling corruption** and **capacity strengthening** were two important areas highlighted.

A major area of focus was on financing national institutions, with a call for **specific targets** for direct funding of national organisations. Some additional, practical ideas were also put forward which would bring immediate change: make funding opportunities more accessible to local actors; design new or replicate current, more **innovative models of funding** that work with donor’s constraints but allow greater funding to local actors working in national languages.

Ten specific recommendations emerging from the online consultation are as follows:

1. **Build trust and recognise the unique role of national actors** - Local and national actors often understand contexts and needs better than outsiders and are better placed to respond to crises; particularly in the early days. Despite this, they are ignored, under-valued and international responses often undermine indigenous disaster-management capacities.

Changing the system will require international actors ceding control and establishing new approaches to risk. Some international donors are sceptical about the capacity of national actors and have stringent due diligence requirements, difficult for national actors to meet.

2. **Address the power imbalance in the current system and seek to change the overall model** - The current system is based on major power imbalances and perverse incentives to sustain the *status quo*. System change will require not only greater empowerment of national and local organisations but a shift in the business models of international actors. Could international actors move towards a model where their effectiveness is measured on the basis of **how they support others to deliver**? Change will require new behaviours and competencies in international institutions - competencies based on collaboration, support, brokering, facilitation, connecting and servant leadership instead of the traditional technocratic, managerial roles that typify the modern INGO.

The goal is not to create local and national organisations in the model of international organisations, but rather to facilitate truly transformative change that enables these actors to strengthen their local legitimacy and credibility and create sustainable institutions with appropriate internal and external systems, structures and financing.

It will be important to not just work on the system as a whole, but also to identify where change can happen in small ways in individual settings.

3. **Address corruption, but recognise that this is unfairly seen as mainly a 'local' issue** - There is a need for greater staff training in tackling corruption which may help assuage international donors' concerns.
4. **Improve partnership** - INGOs, UN agencies and other fund holders should improve the conditions that they pass on to implementing partners; and auditors/regulators who set the rules for donors should replace the incentives that promote control, compliance and overheads with incentives that promote an enabling environment. There must be more emphasis on unrestricted funding of national actors to allow them the autonomy and capacity to build their own organisations and strategic priorities.
5. **Strengthen the capacity of national actors** - International actors should dedicate far more resources to capacity enhancement and institutional strengthening. Donors should fund local, national and regional consortia to create and lead their own capacity-building programmes.
6. **Recognise that in certain contexts access of national actors may be challenging** - Conflict as well as ethnic or tribal tensions may present access challenges for national actors, suggesting an important complementary role in contexts where this is an issue.
7. **Increase direct funding to national organisations and set a target for direct funding** - All actors should pledge to increase the percentage of their humanitarian aid which directly funds national institutions, year on year. A modest target - such as that 20% of humanitarian aid should go directly to local and national actors by 2020 - would be one way of 1) developing better understanding of funding flows and trends, 2) capturing learning on what is working and 3) enabling local actors and their allies to hold INGOs, UN agencies and donors to account for change in the system.
8. **Ease impediments to direct funding of national and local organisations** - Make funding opportunities available to national organisations in appropriate languages, set timeframes relevant to organisational capacities, allow flexibility in minimum grant sizes for NNGOs. Develop new mechanisms specifically designed to facilitate access to international financing for national CSOs. There are examples of umbrella grants and NGO-managed funds that have successfully improved access to funding for national actors.
9. **Increase transparency** - All actors should transparently publish what they channel directly to national organisations according to [IATI/GHA standards](#); and publish what they spend on capacity-building.

10. Develop an evidence base on what works - Undertake research to understand barriers to accessing existing sources of international humanitarian financing and what works in terms of transferring leadership.

Comments on this report are welcomed. Please post online at:

www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_global or send to: global@whsummit.org.

Detailed summaries of the contributions to the discussion can be found in the interim summaries annexed below and available online [here](#).

This report was drafted by the Discussion Moderators with support from the WHS secretariat and UN Online Volunteers: Christelle Cazabat (France), Lyndall King (UK) and Aleksandrina Mavrodieva (Bulgaria).

Disclaimer: the findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this discussion summary report are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the World Humanitarian Summit secretariat, UNOCHA, the United Nations or the participants' organizations.