

Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience

**A study commissioned by the Office for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**

June 2001

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London

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UN)
ACF	Action contre la Faim
ALNAP	Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Revolving Fund
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation Commission
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
EC	European Commission
ECHA	Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPS	Executive Committee on Peace and Security
EH	Emergency Humanitarian Initiative
EMG	Emergency Management Group
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)
FCU	Field Coordination Unit
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FSAU	Food Security Assessment Unit
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIST	Geographic Information Systems Team
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCIC	Humanitarian Community Information Centre
HIS	Health Information System
HLO	Humanitarian Liaison Officers
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
IACU	Inter-Agency Coordination Unit
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
IAS	Joint Interim Administrative Structure
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MOVCON	Movement Control Centres
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Office of the Executive Delegate
OEOA	Office for Emergency Operations in Africa
OFDA	US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAID	Policy Advocacy and Information Department
PCVO	Programme Compliance and Violations Committee
RC	Resident Coordinator
RR	Resident Representative
SACB	Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SG	Secretary-General
SHAPE	Structured Humanitarian Assistance Reporting
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TCOR	Special Relief Operations Service (FAO)
TNG	Transitional National Government
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCAH	United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit for Angola
UN	United Nations
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNCU	United Nations Coordination Unit for Somalia
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRC	United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNDRO	Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo
UNOCA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia (I)
UNPOS	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
UNREO	United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSECOORD	United Nations Security Coordinator
UNSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia (II)
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	Under-Secretary-General
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WHO	World Health Organisation

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*'The United Nations did not respond as a system but rather as a series of separate and largely autonomous agencies. Each had its own institutional dynamics, formulated its own priorities, and moved according to a timetable of its own devising.'*¹

*'The simple reality is that within the diverse UN family, no element has adequate authority to command, coerce or compel any other element to do anything. [This could be called] "Coordination light".'*²

*'The system was characterised by a hollow core. Far from having a strong capacity at the centre to provide leadership and overall coordination to a system involving not just eight UN agencies, but donor organisation teams, military and civil defence contingents, government agencies and over two hundred NGOs involved in the response during 1994, the centre was weak, poorly resourced and lacking in organisational clarity.'*³

*'In the response to serious emergencies one ingredient governs the quality of all others – management....UN agencies argue that there must always be "flexibility according to each emergency situation". This contention, together with the competition for high profile vis-à-vis donors, has made an institution of the ad hoc approach. Flexibility is certainly essential; but it flows from, and is not a substitute for, properly established crisis management.'*⁴

¹ Minear, L., Clark, J., Cohen, R., Gallagher, D., Guest, I. & Weiss, T. (1994) *Humanitarian Action in the Former Yugoslavia: The UN's Role 1991–1993* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 18.

² Minear, L. (1998) 'Learning to Learn – A Discussion Paper prepared for OCHA for the conference Humanitarian Coordination – Lessons Learned, Stockholm, 3–4 April 1998.

³ Borton, J. (1996) *An Account of Coordination Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance during the International Response to the 1994 Crisis in Rwanda*, ADMP Series No 22 (Advanced Development Management Program, Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University: Tokyo).

⁴ Childers, E. & Urquhart, B. (1991) 'Towards a More Effective United Nations' in *Development Dialogue* 1991 (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation: Uppsala, Sweden) p. 60.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In September 2000, the Policy Development Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) commissioned the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to undertake an independent study on humanitarian coordination. The aim was to sharpen thinking on UN humanitarian coordination in the light of processes underway in the UN. These include debates on how the UN chooses coordination arrangements, the report of the UN Panel on Peace Operations – the Brahimi report⁵ – and OCHA's own Change Management Process.

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Draw lessons from recent experiences in humanitarian coordination.
2. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of UN coordination models – that is, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator or so-called 'combined model', the model where the Humanitarian Coordinator is separate from the Resident Coordinator, and the 'lead agency model' – in particular circumstances.
3. Identify features of coordination arrangements which have provided 'added value'.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) further specified a range of questions on specific aspects of coordination including the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), access, information, sectoral coordination, strategic monitoring, and the relationship between humanitarian, development, political and military actors.

The study's methodology was a review of studies of coordination over the last decade, more than 250 interviews with UN, NGOs, the Red Cross Movement, governments, donors and the military, and three case studies of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Kosovo, each based on a week-long visit by the study team. Although the study's focus was the coordination of, and by, the humanitarian agencies of the UN system, as the range of interviewees suggests, the study drew on the experiences and perspective of all those implicated in UN coordination.

The study team encountered a number of constraints, one of which was to address the broad scope of the study and do justice to the wealth of material gathered. Interviewees also challenged the ToR's neglect of humanitarian coordination in natural disasters as a perpetuation of the division between those working in and on natural disasters as opposed to complex emergencies.

SECTION 2: COORDINATION – AN OVERVIEW

2.1 Historical Overview

The UN humanitarian system is composed of six key actors – UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, WHO and UNDP – each established by separate treaties, with its own governance mechanism. The first attempt to establish a comprehensive framework to organise this system was General Assembly Resolution 2816 of 14 December 1971, which created the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) 'to mobilise, direct and coordinate relief.' UNDRO was not a success, and two decades later, prompted also by dissatisfaction with other ad hoc coordination arrangements and Gulf war experiences, General Assembly Resolution 46/182 was passed.

Resolution 46/182 created the post of Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), among other measures. The following year, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) headed by the ERC, also designated Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. In 1994 the IASC approved ToR for Humanitarian Coordinators and in 1997 further refined the options and the criteria to select them. As part of the 1997 reform programme of Secretary-General Annan, the DHA was replaced by a new office with a more streamlined mandate focused on coordination, advocacy and policy development: OCHA.

⁵ Brahimi, L. (2000) *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations A/55/305 S/2000/809* (United Nations: New York) August.

Today, the combined Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator model exists in 14 complex emergencies, the lead agency model in two cases, and six countries have separate Humanitarian Coordinators.

2.2 Defining Coordination

While defining *why* coordination is important may be not be contentious within the UN, defining who coordinates and how it is done provokes fierce debate. Distinctions between strategic and operational coordination are used to fight inter-agency battles about who does what, and reinforce the impression that there are areas of humanitarian response that are unrelated to strategy and all that this implies by way of analysis, goals and monitoring. Also unresolved is whether coordination is a minimal activity preventing duplication and overlap or a more integrating activity that seeks to harmonise responses as part of a single programme or strategy.

One of the definitions used repeatedly in past studies of coordination stood out as potentially useful to the UN:

Coordination is the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilising resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labour, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership.⁶

This definition emphasises coordination functions that are often missing or weak in UN humanitarian coordination. These include:

- The importance of using policy instruments in systematic ways – that is, in an organised way according to established procedures rather than in an ad hoc manner;
- The emphasis on cohesion, bringing elements of a response together;
- The focus on planning, managing information, accountability, functional divisions of labour and sustaining frameworks with political authorities.

2.3 The Changing Context of Humanitarian Coordination

This study was required to focus primarily on the conduct of UN coordination within the humanitarian system. Such an ‘intra-humanitarian’ focus can obscure the significance of political and military actors in facilitating or obstructing humanitarian action. The frequent absence or weakness of legitimate government to prioritise and implement policy creates the UN’s coordination challenge in the first place. The violence and insecurity facing civilians and those that seek to help them are also sickeningly familiar challenges to humanitarian action and its coordination.

Newer challenges include the increasing fragmentation and bilateral management of resources for humanitarian assistance, and thus a reduction in the share of resources received by the UN. Humanitarian aid as a share of rich countries’ wealth is also falling. This is a clarion call for advocacy.

Donors are making greater demands of humanitarian actors to uphold performance standards and increase accountability. For some, this requires greater field capacity to scrutinise and even coordinate humanitarian activity. Case studies suggest there are some donors – the European Commission in particular – who have the capacity and interest to fill any coordination vacuums left by a discredited or ineffective UN. The consequences of this remain unexplored.

The added momentum given to debates on peacebuilding strategies by the Brahimi report, with its as yet undefined role for humanitarians in such activities may prove the latest attempt to explicitly coopt humanitarian action to deliver on wider political goals of peace and security. This could have commensurate coordination difficulties as NGOs and other humanitarians are forced to distance themselves explicitly from a non-neutral UN in the interest of preserving their humanitarian identity, central to efforts to sustain access to civilians in need.

⁶ Minear, L., Chelliah, U., Crisp, J., Mackinlay, J. & Weiss, T. (1992) *UN Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis 1990–1992* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 13.

SECTION 3: OBSTACLES AND INCENTIVES TO COORDINATION

While the context sketched above presents some of the external challenges to the UN's coordination role, the study focused in greater detail on challenges more internal to the UN. Past studies, interviews and case studies reveal a picture of structural, institutional and management obstacles to coordination.

3.1 Structural Obstacles

Although described as a system, there is little about the combined structure of the UN's funds, agencies and programmes that is systematic. Each is required to respond to the often-divergent imperatives set by their different governance structures influenced by the political interests of UN Member States. In the same way, while donors vociferously demand coordination, donor earmarking, micro-management, visibility concerns and political agendas all thwart it. Donors have also proved weak at coordinating themselves.

UN agencies' demonstrated preoccupation with securing donor approval further weakens the coordination imperative. The push for profile necessary to attract funding posits sister agencies as competitors in a market they perceive to be shrinking. OCHA appears particularly vulnerable in this environment that makes market competitors out of humanitarian collaborators as donor enthusiasm for OCHA appears to correlate directly with UN agency mistrust.

3.2 Institutional Obstacles

The competition for funds exacerbates institutional cultures that foster agency allegiance over system-wide loyalty, where staff commitment to coordinated outcomes is neither required nor rewarded. Agencies have proved unwilling to release their 'best people' for secondment into coordination functions, preferring to retain them to deliver their agency's mandate. Some argue that maintaining effective agency operations has the greatest direct impact on beneficiaries – the fundamental concern for humanitarians. Yet effective coordination increases the impact of the overall response. Requiring staff to coordinate and seconding skilled staff to play co-ordination roles are essential to the system's performance.

However, where Coordinators are perceived to have vested institutional interests – for instance, having joint responsibility for operations and coordination – they are likely to attract hostility and be unsuccessful in their coordination role. This is also true of the UN system as a whole where some agencies are prone to focus on UN matters to the exclusion or neglect of NGOs and the Red Cross Movement, who are key players and partners in humanitarian response.

3.3 Management Obstacles

Weak management compounds these structural and institutional difficulties. Such weakness is manifest in the 'adhocracy' that this study concludes characterises the UN's coordination. Comparing one situation to another, there is little that is done in a systematic way. While some claim this shows flexibility, it in fact reveals decisions not made, conflicts not resolved, and the influence of politics on management decisions. This appears to be true of all levels in the UN. In practice it results in staff with unclear roles, responsibilities, reporting lines and accountabilities, and huge numbers of people sent into the field with little induction or guidance on fundamental matters.

Ad interim arrangements are another facet of this ad hoc approach that highlights one of the apparent ironies of 'flexible' arrangements: they are both vulnerable to be changed at any moment, and may be left to fester with dysfunctions going ignored. They are also a prime example of how adhocracy puts a huge onus on individuals to work things out on the ground. On the positive side, not having requirements or systems set in stone offers room for innovation. Negatively, the weak management associated with adhocracy allows the incompetent to underperform or create chaos. Such adhocracy seems to be built into the UN system, both as a product and cause of the resistance to coordination.

3.4 The Ingredients of Success

In the face of such obstacles, coordination is against the odds. However, **coordination does happen where contexts conducive to coordination dilute the impact of obstacles**, such as small numbers of humanitarian agencies, where relationships among agencies have been built over time, and where shared technical expertise facilitates communication and increases focus on how to achieve shared goals rather than agency profiles.

Coordination also happens where incentives to coordinate are increased – whether because agencies have to work together in the interests of their own security or to achieve access to beneficiaries, or where donor or media scrutiny requires it or supports it. Coordinators vested with control of access or funds at critical stages in the response also provided a powerful incentive to others to coordinate, provided these elements were in the hands of those with a mentality of inclusion and service-orientation.

Agencies can be persuaded to coordinate where coordination clearly adds value. A crucial ingredient here is leadership. Two key elements in leadership are effective managerial skills and analytical skills that offer clarity, structure and direction for both field operations and humanitarian advocacy. The team was struck by the significance of the ‘intellectual route’ to authority and influence within the UN. Committed, experienced, competent Coordinators who foster trust, build teams, and focus on humanitarian response rather than an agency add value. Yet adding value also depends on having sufficient and skilled support staff to perform essential coordination functions.

If adhocism is one of the obstacles to coordination, so **making coordination more systematic** is its antidote. Although removing many of the obstacles to coordination depend on the actions of Member States and donors, the above analysis suggests the UN will maximise the likelihood of effective coordination by consistently ensuring that:

- Coordinators have sufficient competence, management skills, dynamism and vision to give them authority to persuade or encourage others to coordinate.
- Coordinators have elements of command at their fingertips, such as control over funding and access, in order to increase the incentives or requirements of others to coordinate.
- Coordination is carried out by those who do not have vested institutional interests but rather provide services for the whole system, and for whom coordination is a full-time job.
- The Coordinator is supported by skilled staff to perform essential functions and services.
- There is effective accountability for coordination through clear structures and reporting lines, including clarity on who deputises for the Coordinator and what his/her responsibilities will be. This requires monitoring and assessment to ensure that good performance is rewarded and poor performance is sanctioned.

The benefits of planning in advance, having rosters of available staff and well-written Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) are also ingredients of more systematic responses.

Yet there is **one further key ingredient** for effective humanitarian action and coordination upon which even the best laid plans and procedures depend: a focus on the people who are in need. No structures or incentives can compensate for lack of commitment to an effective, coordinated response to the needs of beneficiaries.

SECTION 4: THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COORDINATION MODELS

The previous section set out some of essential ingredients of effective coordination, namely that it is recognised as a full-time task requiring particular skills and competencies, and that it must be resourced, performed and respected as such. The coordination role requires skilled support teams, clear lines of accountability for coordination, and that coordination is carried out by players with no vested interest who perform a service for whole system.

These ingredients should have a bearing on how the UN selects coordination arrangements. They provide clear criteria for any coordination structure to fulfil. Yet the study concluded that the selection of coordination arrangements seems only weakly connected with both the lessons from past performance and the demands of the context. The interests of the Secretary-General and the major UN operational agencies seem to prevail in decisions that focus on the top of coordination structures – that is, how they get led – and pays little attention to specifying what and how coordination services and functions are provided. (Tensions around the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships of OCHA field staff are a direct result of this.) Thus the study concludes that the **IASC should focus more on specifying the composition, functions and competencies of coordination teams and structures, not solely responsibilities at the top.**

Although the study disputes that the models as specified by the UN are the key determinants of coordination outcomes – arguing that the role of host governments or authorities, the actors involved in coordination and their respective geographical location, and the nature and frequency of coordination activities are all significant – the study presented assessments of their respective strengths and weaknesses.

The combined role of **Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator** provides a sense of uniformity to arrangements globally, and can contribute to bridging the relief–development gap. UNDP's willingness to bear the cost of coordination is another point in its favour. Yet many interviewees expressed doubts about Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators' ability to carry out robust humanitarian diplomacy, for example, on the rights of refugees or IDPs. The fiercest criticism is the lack of humanitarian coordination experience or skills of existing Resident Coordinators. The study concludes that **if the Secretary-General and IASC members continue to favour appointing Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators, this should be accompanied by a number of measures to mitigate the disadvantages**, including a pool of candidates that are agreed to be suitably qualified, more rigorous performance monitoring, and decisive approaches to replace those not up to the job.

The logic behind the use of the **lead agency model** is undeniable. Where one agency is overwhelmingly present, it makes sense to use the infrastructure in place for the benefit of coordination. In theory the model also appears attractive because it comes closest to institutionalising 'command functions' within one agency. However, in practice the evidence suggests that it has **not been possible for an agency with operational responsibilities to coordinate for the benefit of the system**. Lead agencies have tended to mould the emergency in their own image, to favour their own programme rather than focus on the overall response, and to interpret coordination as control. Yet lead agencies have insufficient control to compel others to coordinate, and in practice have undertaken insufficient consensus-building efforts to persuade others to coordinate. If there were effective personnel rosters to establish rapid response coordination teams in the earliest days of an emergency, the problematic option of carving capacity out of the lead agency would no longer be necessary.

The team concluded that there is a **strong case for the IASC to favour the Humanitarian Coordinator being separate from the Resident Coordinator**. This is not least due to concern at the dearth of suitable candidates for the positions of Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and the slow pace at which the pool of competent candidates is being enlarged. It also stems from a recognition of the scale of the challenges faced in humanitarian coordination such as the importance of leadership in overcoming the obstacles to coordination within the UN, and the importance of advocacy and negotiating access. This is so particularly in cases of large-scale rapid onset emergencies where territorial control is divided among belligerents. The team was struck that this opinion was widely held among interviewees. Their view contrasted with that of the IASC in arguing that this option should be the rule rather than the exception. To address the risk that separate Coordinators entrench false distinctions between relief and development in intellectual or operational terms, the UN will need clear strategies to guide its action and strong collaboration among all those on the ground. Secondments from operational agencies to the post of Humanitarian Coordinator should be actively sought.

SECTION 5: HOW COORDINATION GETS DONE

Section 5 elaborates on the study's recurring theme that effective coordination adds value to humanitarian response by performing key tasks and offering a range of services and skills to humanitarian agencies. The report sets out some of the ingredients that make such tasks, services and tools more or less helpful, as well as challenges associated with providing them.

5.1 Coordinating Integrated Responses – Tasks and Techniques

Analysis: The fact that the IASC's list of strategic coordination functions excludes analysis and that donors show little interest in agencies' understanding of their environment reinforces the notion that analysis is an optional extra. Yet in the words of one interviewee, *'Offering a compelling vision of what can be achieved based on sound analysis of context is perhaps the greatest value added ever offered to coordination.'* Such analysis underpins effective strategies, including those to ensure that humanitarian aid does more good than harm. Good contextual knowledge and situational analysis are critical elements of effective security management. Analysis is also a vital part of learning lessons, which is currently weak. Both Coordinators and their team members require strong analytical skills. Yet effective analysis also depends on techniques and systems to gather, share and manage information.

Formulating a Strategy and Plan: Too often humanitarian actors are unable to articulate what they are trying to achieve, or how particular actions relate to precise goals. This impairs coordination and response. This study finds that strategies are most valuable when they are based on sound analysis and focus on tackling problems in an integrated way rather than in mandate sized pieces; when they focus on providing both humanitarian protection and assistance, and include the principles and standards that will inform that approach. They should also focus on specific, measurable targets and have benchmarks against which progress can be monitored. At their best, strategies emerge from processes that allow participants opportunities for joint analysis and reflection, which includes NGOs and actors outside the UN. To get the most from joint planning requires harmonising planning tools and cycles.

Standards: Given the absence or weakness of any government structure setting standards, humanitarians are left to delineate their own guide for action. Without agreed standards, this may vary radically from one situation to another. Conducting humanitarian activity in a stable, predictable manner is central to fostering respect for humanitarian principles and practice. Coordination teams have central roles to play in facilitating principled responses. Yet at the field level the team found little evidence of attempts to standardise the response among agencies, beyond their expressed commitment to the Sphere standards. While the study found examples where standards had been agreed, and even where compliance mechanisms had been established, overall the lack of system-wide agreement on what standards should be used and questions about who has sufficient power or legitimacy to assess compliance predominate in most settings.

Agreeing/Assigning Division of Labour and Allocating Resources: Coordinators can add value by orchestrating divisions of labour so that humanitarian response meets all the most urgent needs and not solely those that conform to agency mandates or mission statements. The division of labour is done well where Coordinators have sufficient legitimacy such that agencies will accept greater direction rather than suggestion, and agencies pool resources and allow the Coordinator to suggest matching of resources and needs. To address the gaps and duplications that exist among UN mandates and the skills of NGOs, funds should be put in the hands of the Coordinators – whether small funds to cover gaps, or more radically by establishing a common fund at country-level to receive all responses to the CAP from which the Coordinator allocates funds to respective agencies.

Advocacy: This was an area of weakness, although a valued activity. Advocacy was often described as an end in itself rather than as a set of influencing tactics as critical to operational response as a water tank or food parcel. The study found a number of examples where Coordinators and their teams had played critical roles in coordinating advocacy actions, facilitating others, or acting as a spokesperson with warring parties, governments, donors and the media to push them to uphold their responsibilities to respect humanitarian principles. These experiences highlighted that effective advocacy requires sound analysis of the problem, clear messages and proposals for action, the ability to seize all available opportunities, and readiness to press the difficult issues.

However, the study team was struck by the muteness of UN agencies towards donors – that is, an apparent unwillingness by the UN to criticise donor government policies. This study argues that humanitarian agencies, particularly the UN, must better manage the tension between relying on donors for funds, complying with their Executive Boards, and pressing donors and governments to uphold rights to assistance and protection.

Negotiating Access/Securing and Sustaining a Framework of Consent: Skilled and experienced people that negotiate access for the benefit of the UN and NGOs are highly valued by the humanitarian community. Clarity on principles and bottom lines among all those negotiating is also valuable to prevent belligerents playing agencies off against each other. Securing agreement among UN agencies on who has principal responsibility for negotiating access is also important if training and resources are to be correctly targeted. Experience suggests that negotiation is done well where negotiators have strong back up in terms of analysis and situation monitoring, and donors and governments provide additional leverage or undertake complementary diplomatic and political action.

Monitoring Strategy: There were strikingly few examples of monitoring the progress and impact of strategies from which to draw. Yet effective monitoring is essential in order to evaluate the positive and negative impact of humanitarian response, ensure that the response addresses changing circumstances, and to assist with context analysis and lesson learning. Where coordination teams record such information, they can act as an institutional memory function. This is particularly important when staff turnover is high and has proved useful for subsequent evaluations of the response. This highlights the value of resources being dedicated to the monitoring function.

5.2 Facilitating Collaboration – Tasks and Services

As Coordinators have to build consensus in order to be effective, experience suggests coordination is imbued with a strong element of *quid pro quo*. Past experiences suggest there is a range of tasks and services that Coordinators can provide to garner agencies' cooperation. These add value to individual agency responses, facilitate collaboration among agencies, and boost the profile of the coordination structures that offer them.

Security: Poorly coordinated security measures can corrode the trust and collaboration central to coordination as well as place lives in jeopardy. In the face of Member States' resistance to fund additional security measures, UN agencies, who have been pushing for stronger centralised resources, have been forced to both provide funds and second staff to UNSECOORD. The IASC Security Working Group has also focused on measures to improve inter-agency collaboration on security. This study's evidence suggests that coordination teams should include dedicated capability to focus on security plans, assessments and advisories and efforts to devise common strategies. A neglected element of such strategies appears to be emphasis on the importance of building relationships with local communities in order that they use whatever influence they have over armed groups who might threaten humanitarian action and actors. It is essential that the UN is clear to non-UN agencies about what protection and evacuation arrangements the UN system can provide.

Logistics coordination: Agencies or Coordinators that have been willing and able to put their services and capabilities at the service of others have made a huge difference to agencies' operations and been strongly appreciated. Agreed sets of procedures for joint logistics operations have also helped collaboration and coordination. Efforts to create an inter-agency capacity to establish UN Joint Logistics Centres at the onset of a large-scale emergency is an important development in this regard. Evidence suggested that **additional useful services** include providing common communication facilities, facilitating visas and laissez-passer, providing pigeonholes, meeting space, GIS/database and mapping services, NGO liaison, a front desk service, and guiding staff through induction services and training. Well-run meetings, as well as being the most obvious tool by which information is gathered and shared, are also useful for team building, problem solving and building networks.

Resource mobilisation: If decentralised funding decisions emerge as an enduring trend among donors, the value attached to coordination teams involved in field-level resource mobilisation could increase. On the basis of the evidence, resource mobilisation is done well where the Coordinator does not have responsibility for a particular agency's operations and where efforts are prepared jointly. The study argues that these efforts are likely to have greatest positive impact where they are directed at system-wide responses, or even common funds.

Information: There is universal consensus that information sharing is the *sine qua non* of coordination activity. The capacity to filter, analyse, synthesise and present information into digestible and easily used form is a valuable service. A common theme was the high value placed on information services that are provided in an equal way for the benefit of the entire humanitarian community rather than solely for the UN or NGOs. The study outlines valued products and processes, including maps, graphs and matrixes of who is doing what where, directories of contacts, translation of local press, and the often neglected factor of access to archive material such as past assessments.

Central to improving information gathering and provision is being clear on what information is needed for what purpose, and who has the responsibility for gathering it. Minimising the duplication in data gathering and maximising its accessibility to potential users is also crucial. (Sharing information is one of the foundations of coordination, but to gather information in the most efficient way requires coordination.) Another key challenge is to solve the problem of how to gather and disseminate politically sensitive information and analysis. All this highlights the importance of having sufficient staff who have specific information management skills. Agreeing guidelines for basic data collection and dissemination is an important element in making coordination more consistently effective.

5.3 Tools and Structures

Humanitarian Coordinators and their teams also have a number of tools and structures that they can utilise or with which they interact. Tools include the CAP and MoUs, while structures include coordination at sectoral and regional levels as well as the IASC.

The CAP: For most interviewees, despite the continuous efforts to improve the CAP, there is little uniformity in how it is done, what or whom it includes, and how it is used. For many it remains a funding-focused public relations exercise with little integrated planning or prioritisation that leaves the donors to cherry pick or even ignore it. Although globally the CAP provides one of the only tools that enables comparison of international responses to humanitarian need, at its worst preparing the CAP is more oriented to estimating likely donor response than a reliable assessment of humanitarian need. However, donors continue to express enthusiasm for the CAP and to find it useful in various ways.

Although it is far from producing system-wide integrated strategies and plans, by bringing people together the CAP has the potential to be an important opportunity to do this if effectively facilitated, supported and 'marketed' to agencies. This could underpin programming, security, impact assessment and inter-agency advocacy. As an effective funding tool, it is necessary for Coordinators to be given greater authority to facilitate and ultimately perform prioritisation.

Sectoral coordination: Although sectoral coordination it is likely to be made easier by a shared focus among all participants, the study revealed it is not immune to the difficulties encountered in coordination in general. It can impose burdens that outweigh its benefits when the number of coordination bodies proliferates. Allocating responsibility can also prove contentious, particularly when no agency has clear technical expertise or mandated responsibility. Both donors and agencies can resist the Coordinator's efforts to address this, suggesting that there needs to be more work at the central level to build in predictability on allocating responsibilities.

Experience suggests that sectoral coordination works well where sectoral level strategies are linked to fulfilling the overall response strategy, and if full-time Coordinators are appointed at the sectoral level that are technically competent and are prepared to 'shame and blame' others into upholding their undertakings. Field units that collect and disseminate information, advise on strategies, and act as focal points for debate have also been useful. It is also important that sectoral coordination does not preclude focus on cross-cutting issues such as human rights or protection.

Regional coordination: As one UN interviewee commented '*It is critical for the UN to get better at this given that the problems we address do not stay within borders.*' Regional structures have, on occasion, compensated for weak support from headquarters and have offered invaluable logistics or administrative support; on other occasions these structures have duplicated efforts. Many argued that regional coordination can be best achieved by country coordination structures establishing a flow of information and analysis between them. Interviewees' key complaint concerned confusion about how Coordinators and structures at the regional level relate to those at country-level. Clarity about respective roles and responsibilities, ensuring that these are complementary rather than duplicating, strong collaboration among Coordinators, and the provision of resources to enable coordination teams within a region to come together are all recommended if regional coordination is to be valuable.

MoUs counter the tendency to leave UN Country Teams to negotiate continually new relationships at field level, although there is debate about the precise level of detail that is helpful. Broad frameworks where specific interpretation of language can be interpreted in a particular context are most useful. For others, this left too much to interpretation.

The IASC is the mechanism through which field structures are put in place. Although participants cite improvements in the IASC over time, frustrations remain. Its broad membership is seen as its most important feature. As a focus for regular inter-agency interaction, it has fostered collaborative spirit. Yet within the IASC there is a preoccupation with inclusion. Furthermore, in a body that relies on consensus, decision-making is protracted and difficult issues get dodged. This is partly because all participants report to different boards, which causes weak buy-in and accountability. But it is not helped by having overloaded meeting agendas. As a result, much substantive work gets done in the corridors.

All of this has a direct bearing on decision-making over decisions about field coordination structures. Much of this debate appears to take place outside the IASC meetings and thus minimises the role of non-UN members. Furthermore, the process appears heavily oriented to accommodating the preferences and politics of the major UN operational agencies rather than solely focusing on the demands of the situation on the ground.

The weak links between staff in the field and those in headquarters also impinge on the IASC's decision-making and effectiveness. Doubts were expressed about the IASC's responsiveness to field-level coordination difficulties. Conversely, although Humanitarian Coordinators may be invited to attend the IASC when their countries are being discussed, in the field there appears to be little interest in the IASC. However, studies and interviewees alike perceived the potential of the IASC. The words of one UN interviewee sum this up well: *'OCHA has in its hand a fantastic tool. Why doesn't it use it? Why not try to make it the voice of the humanitarian community?'*

Thus for this study, the key areas for improvement are:

- More focus on the situation's demands in decision-making over the appointments of Coordinators.
- Better monitoring of coordination structures in the field.
- The instigation of more systematic consultation and communication processes through coordination teams on the ground.
- Strengthening IASC-wide advocacy.

5.4 Conclusion

It is notable that some of the tasks that are most valued are among the weakest aspects of current coordination. These are also the tasks that have proved critical to facilitating integrated responses to humanitarian need - such as analysis, strategy setting, establishing standards, divisions of labour, advocacy and negotiating access, and monitoring impact.

A repeated theme of this study is that the UN can improve coordination by devoting more energy to building skills and capacity to coordinate response in a more systematic and accountable way. Thus the tasks and services above should be part of a standard coordination package on offer to increase the impact of response. As complex emergencies by their definition preclude a one-size-fits-all policy, such packages should be a menu of possible options and arrangements on which the IASC should decide in accordance with the demands of the particular context and emergency.

SECTION 6: LIAISING WITH MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTORS

The study's ToR asked whether in different settings the relationship between humanitarian, political and military actors is coherent. The term coherence is variously used: its mildest interpretation argues for political, military and humanitarian action to be mutually reinforcing, its strongest that humanitarians should be subject to political goals. What emerged from this study was the tension between the emphasis on the strong interpretation from key players in the Secretariat, and the powerful examples from case studies of the importance for humanitarians to resist this; to guard their independence not as end in itself but as the cornerstone of practical strategies to attempt to sustain a framework of consent from belligerents. This was likely to involve demonstrating separation from political and military players on the ground.

As the Secretary-General's views have appeared to shift on whether humanitarian assistance should be insulated from, or integrated into, broader political frameworks, it is perhaps not surprising that some SRSGs have been accused of having interpreted coherence as a justification for them to gain political mileage from control of humanitarian assets. Yet this perverts the very definition of humanitarian action that seeks to confer no military or political advantage. It also threatens security: As one interviewee remarked, *'Wherever we are associated with political strategies, we increase our own risk.'* This highlights the risks of misguided enthusiasm for designating Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators as deputy to the SRSG.

Separation is not always necessary. The nature of the political and military strategies and how beneficiaries and belligerents see them is a key determinant for how humanitarians position themselves. Thus silence about the nature of the strategic goals for such coherent strategies is also part of the problem. In the wake of the Brahimi report, there is renewed pressure for all aspects of UN strategies to converge around peacebuilding, which is seen as unproblematic. Yet it should not be assumed that peacebuilding is inherently apolitical. It may mask unarticulated agendas and creates the possibility that humanitarian aid is simply coopted to meet political ends.

The coherence sought or required of UN humanitarians has a major significance for their relationship with other humanitarian actors, who are ready to distance themselves from the UN. Key players in the UN Secretariat are dismissive of any dilemma, arguing that UN agencies have different responsibilities from NGOs. However, the humanitarian label links all those who use it, and such coherence could have operational impacts beyond the UN humanitarian agencies.

This highlights the need for greater clarity from all sides on the respective roles of all players in order to be able to establish a clear division of labour and to delimit responsibilities among political, military and humanitarian actors. Advocacy, clear and limited points of contact to enable information flow, and clear locations and frameworks for planning multifaceted strategies are essential.

SECTION 7: OCHA'S ROLE

OCHA's invidious position of having a mandate for coordination that is undermined by a lack of authority and clout, resistance from UN agencies, and uncertain funding is a prime example of the structural obstacles to UN coordination.

Yet OCHA also undermines its frail credibility by fluctuating performance. Although providing dynamic, highly competent people to serve humanitarians has been at the heart of OCHA's success to date, all too many staff are slow to be deployed, given uncertain or no contracts, and poorly briefed. Staff turnover is high - a crippling failure for an organisation that depends on the calibre of its people. While the team were struck how UN agencies repeatedly seek to minimise OCHA's profile, OCHA also jeopardises success when it fails to consult or engage others effectively, or to give the impression that its interest in service is merely rhetorical device rather than an organisational commitment.

Setting aside the possibility of fundamental structural change, the study focuses on how OCHA can build its legitimacy and gain support by providing high quality coordination services. The study argues that OCHA should develop itself as a centre of excellence for coordination support functions at regional, country and sectoral levels. This depends on OCHA retaining and recruiting dynamic, highly competent and experienced people at the service of the humanitarian community. Thus OCHA should earn its profile by the reputation of its services for other humanitarians, and thus its impact on humanitarian response, rather than for its own sake. The study also concludes that excellence in access negotiations, political analysis and advocacy have been features of past successes and should be among OCHA's core strengths.

OCHA concedes that it has not yet fulfilled its potential advocacy role. This is particularly the case at headquarters. OCHA has a unique position as the humanitarian voice within the Secretariat. Its challenge is to both leverage its proximity to the Secretary-General's office to give it weight, while continually engaging in robust advocacy targeted at those within the Secretariat. The fact that key players in the Secretariat remain unclear about the dangers posed to humanitarian access and action by the requirements of 'coherence' signals the urgency for the ERC and OCHA to strategise with its sister UN agencies and other humanitarians about how to push this advocacy agenda. But evidence suggests that OCHA will have to work harder to convince others that it can be an effective humanitarian voice in the face of the political pressures that converge in the Secretariat.

While the onus is in part on OCHA to perform and persuade, the study team maintain that there must be pressure on agencies to respect OCHA's mandate from the Secretary-General and donors.

SECTION 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The Obstacles to Change

One of the underlying themes in this study as it presents the conclusions from past studies, interviews and case studies is that there is little new to say. The report sets out in some detail the picture that recurs over a decade of UN humanitarian agencies whose governance structures, funding sources, weak management and institutional cultures all constitute obstacles to effective coordination. It has also described the blight of adhocism that remains in how the UN system coordinates. The repeated refrains of reviews and studies suggest that a pivotal problem confronting the system is its inability to change. This is the result of resistance on the part of Member States and donors, and weaknesses internal to the system.

The evidence also reveals a 'system' that shows determined resistance to cede authority to anyone or any structure. Instead, all Coordinators have to work on the basis of coordination by consensus. In the face of the obstacles, this is an uphill struggle.

To eradicate some of these obstacles requires fundamental change. Yet despite the manifold obstacles to coordination, remarkably, humanitarian coordination does happen, although performance remains patchy. This study concludes that there is much that UN agencies can do to maximise the likelihood that humanitarian response is effectively coordinated, despite the structural obstacles and that it is incumbent upon them to do so.

This responsibility derives from the expectations of governments and humanitarian agencies of the UN's central and unique role to coordinate the humanitarian efforts of the international community. Yet this study has shown that there are others, in particular donors, who will fill the vacuum left by a UN system that fails to deliver in this coordinating role.

8.2 Options for Change

Given these conclusions, the options for improving coordination range from fundamental change to remove obstacles, to more incremental ones to increase the incentives to coordinate. It is important to reiterate that none of the options for change or recommendations are entirely new. Many of them echo recommendations of studies of coordination over more than a decade. This suggests that **the problem is not a dearth of recommendations** about how to improve coordination, **but lack of both management accountability for successes or failures and sufficient commitment to improving humanitarian response.**

1. Fundamental structural reform of the UN's humanitarian operations

Given the accumulated evidence that consensus models are not strong enough to achieve effective coordination in the face of chronic systemic obstacles, the study believes that there is a strong case to be made for structural reform. Notwithstanding the recent debate around UN reform, the scale of the problem suggests this debate must be reopened if there is genuine commitment to strengthening the humanitarian response of the UN.

The limited scope of this study prohibits systematic consideration of detailed recommendations. But it is clear that the challenge is to construct a body or structure with sufficient authority to be able to manage and guide humanitarian action – whether directly through a management line of one single humanitarian agency, or through a sufficiently powerful new structure that stands above existing funds and programmes to ensure prioritised and integrated responses. Such a structure should link with political actors to devise the political strategies necessary to address the causes of conflict and human suffering, as well as with development actors to ensure effective coordination between relief and development activity. Such a structure would also need to retain the elements currently fulfilled by diverse mandates; it should be both more efficient and responsive; and it should be able to relate effectively to humanitarian actors outside the UN.

In a world of conglomerating NGOs who are increasingly favoured by donors, and where there is greater momentum to integrate UN humanitarian operations into broader peacebuilding approaches, there are some who advocate that the debate should ask yet more fundamental questions about the comparative advantage of the UN. They raise questions about whether, instead of current levels of operational response, the UN should focus on 'core business' such as coordination, setting standards, upholding protection for refugees and IDPs, monitoring, and negotiating access.

2. Change the funding for humanitarian coordination and increase Coordinators' authority on the ground

In the interests of more systematic and effective coordination, and to avoid those with coordination responsibilities from competing with others, OCHA should be funded from assessed contributions. At field level, in place of funding particular agencies in response to the Consolidated Appeal, donors should contribute funds to a common fund in the hands of the Coordinator who should be vested with authority to prioritise and allocate funds to the strategy formulated by humanitarian agencies in the field.

3. Strengthening the Current Decentralised System

At the heart of change is the need for improved management, stronger accountability, and more systematic approaches to coordination.

The current reliance on Coordinators and their teams having to persuade others to coordinate must be buttressed by greater sanction attached to failing to coordinate. The commitment to coordination should be fostered by requiring all staff to focus on the system-wide response to beneficiaries' needs rather than solely on their agency's interests. At a minimum, all agencies must expect and instil greater discipline through conventional management lines so that personnel are assessed and rewarded on the basis of their participation and contribution to inter-agency coordination and coordinated outcomes.

All coordination structures and personnel should have clear guidance, reporting lines and defined relationships with all other key players. There needs to be greater efforts from the system to monitor coordination and to be quicker to resolve difficulties where they occur. Such difficulties should be the subject of evaluation and subsequent lessons to be learnt.

To maximise the ability of coordination teams to persuade others to coordinate, greater financial and management resources should be directed at the provision of coordination services and tools that clearly 'add value' to individual agency operations. This also requires greater leadership by high-calibre, experienced staff. OCHA has an important role to play in this.

8.3 The Pivotal Role of UN Member States and Donors

Effecting any of these options requires action from several quarters. To reiterate: **any change – whether that of enduring systemic change or maximising the effectiveness of the current system – requires changes in the behaviour of Member States and donors.**

Overall, if Member States and donors want better humanitarian coordination, they must be prepared to fund coordination costs and to place their expectations only where mandated responsibilities lie. Funding coordination from assessed contributions is a vital part of this, as is establishing a fund for the ERC to pay Humanitarian Coordinators.

Among the measures to maximise the effect of the current system, donors should support the development and agreement of indicators to assess coordination and its impact as well as the contribution of agencies to it as a criterion for funding. Performance appraisal systems that assess staff on the basis of their commitment to coordination in addition to the willingness of agencies to second competent staff could be among these indicators. Donors should apply greater pressure to UN humanitarian agencies and NGOs to support and respect the role of OCHA, as well as strengthen OCHA to work for the benefit of the humanitarian response rather than its own agency profile. Donors can strengthen their coordination within and among themselves and demonstrate more consistent support to coordination through their funding and their presence on the legislative bodies of organisations (whether the UNSC, UNGA, or Executive Boards).

As well as increasing levels of humanitarian aid to ensure impartial response to all those in need, donors should provide increased resources for efforts aimed at strengthening coordination such as monitoring, appraisal, assessment and shared training. Donors should also contribute to common funds, whether small additional funds for Humanitarian Coordinators to fill gaps in the response or, more radically, a fund to receive all contributions to the CAP. Both measures should be accompanied by donor support for the Coordinator to undertake prioritisation in place of donor earmarking.

8.4 The Role of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has a vital role in strengthening commitment to coordination and coordinated outcomes. He can lend the full weight of his authority to the ERC and insist that agencies recognise this. He can push for greater system-wide orientation. He can also encourage the heads of the operational agencies to second staff and establish rosters of those available, urge them to support the creation of common funds for management by the Coordinator – whether for filling gaps in response, or more radically, to receive all funds for the CAP – and require that they strengthen the requirement of their staff to contribute to coordinated outcomes by including this in performance appraisals.

The Secretary-General also has a critical role to play in reducing the adhocism that currently blights coordination, for instance by ensuring the implementation of the Brahimi report's recommendations that SRSGs, Force Commanders, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators all have clear guidance, reporting lines and relationships with all other key players. (The reservations regarding other aspects of the report have been outlined above.)

Finally, the Secretary-General has important responsibilities to advocate that humanitarian action retains its independence from political and military strategies of the UN and Member States. For this to be effective, it requires clear points of contact and information exchange between political or humanitarian players. The Secretary-General must quash resistance to this in the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

8.5 Consolidated Recommendations to the ERC, OCHA and the IASC

The following recommendations combine those elaborated in the text with additional recommendations based on the study's conclusions. These are among the measures that should be well within the grasp of a UN system serious about the effective coordination of action to protect the rights of human beings to protection and assistance.

Recommendations to the ERC and OCHA

OCHA's Change Management Report presents a raft of recommendations to address some of OCHA's weaknesses. This report recommends the following priorities:

1. OCHA, in close discussion with IASC members, should draw together the lessons from this study as well as its current proposals for field coordination into a package of coordination services and tools, along with the prototype office structures and staff competencies associated with providing them. This can then be used as a menu of options on offer for all Coordinators. This should be presented to the IASC for agreement with an associated action plan, including a training programme, to ensure that OCHA can provide quality coordination services.
2. The ERC has a vital role to play in proactive monitoring of the conduct of coordination, particularly at the start of new emergencies, and reporting back to the IASC and to the Secretary-General. The ERC may need an enhanced monitoring and evaluation capacity that reports directly to him/her, using *inter alia*, indicators as recommended in A3 below.
3. OCHA should further strengthen the CAP as an inter-agency analysis and strategy-setting process, including working with UN Country Teams to provide analysis tools and facilitation for the process. The involvement in the analytical process of NGOs, the Red Cross Movement and UN political and military actors and analysts should be actively sought.
4. The ERC has a vital role to play in robust advocacy – both within the Secretariat and with UN Member States – on the principles, role and limits of humanitarian action, and the political action required to uphold the right to humanitarian assistance and protection. ECHA and ECPS are important fora for advocacy on the nature, challenges and limits to humanitarian action; the ERC can also press for action in the political, diplomatic and peacekeeping sphere. It will be important to strategise with other humanitarians about how to push this advocacy agenda. The IASC – given its broad membership – is the obvious forum for such strategising.

Recommendations to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

It is recommended that the IASC review the findings of this study and formulate an action plan for follow up. Among the measures that should be included are the following:

A. Appraisal

1. The UN members of the IASC should review and revise existing performance appraisal schemes for all staff. These should include criteria to measure demonstrated contribution to inter-agency coordination and coordinated outcomes. Particular incentives should be attached to secondments to inter-agency efforts.
2. The UN members of the IASC should establish an inter-agency working group to compare and harmonise performance appraisal schemes and the rewards and sanctions associated with contributing to coordination or thwarting it.
3. The IASC should agree performance appraisal criteria and a regular appraisal process for Humanitarian Coordinators. This should include indicators for behaviour or action that would trigger a process of review leading to removal from the position.
4. The IASC should work with donors to identify indicators of coordination and coordinated outcomes as the basis for funding decisions. Performance appraisal systems that assess staff on the basis of their commitment to coordination, and the willingness of agencies to second competent staff, should be among these indicators.

B. Recruitment of Coordination Staff

1. The IASC should intensify its efforts to work with the UNDG and OCHA to agree the competencies and selection processes for Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators. This should include agreement of where skills for Humanitarian Coordinators might differ from or clash with those expected of Resident Coordinators.
2. All IASC member agencies should intensify efforts to establish an inter-agency roster of coordination staff that indicates staff skills and availability. They should do this by undertaking a thorough process of identifying individuals with aptitude for coordination positions – whether as Humanitarian Coordinators or support staff – including those with potential but who may require training.
3. The IASC should explore with non-UN members the potential for extended secondments of NGO personnel as Coordinators and support staff. This would require the agreement of potential training needs necessary for non-UN staff to work for the UN.

C. Induction Processes

1. The IASC should form an inter-agency working group on induction processes to compare current guidance and information provided to new staff. On the basis of this review, this group should develop a series of training materials and processes for generic guidance to help staff anticipate and overcome challenges. This would be provided to all staff going to the field, or as refresher courses for existing staff. Such materials should include information on mandates, activities and competencies of all IASC members, humanitarian principles, Sphere standards, impact indicators, and security, as agreed by the IASC. This could form a common UN humanitarian handbook.
2. The IASC should agree that one of the aspects of the coordination package provided by OCHA should include providing induction guidance tailored to the specific context to offer as a service to incoming staff of all humanitarian agencies. This could also have an additional benefit of encouraging staff to deepen their understanding and their political, economic and social analysis that is essential to effective humanitarian response.
3. All IASC members should commit to making handovers between staff more systematic by including them in all job descriptions as a requirement of all departing staff. At headquarters, management should be improved to increase the number of handovers that take place.

D. Monitoring

1. The IASC should agree a process to evaluate field coordination at regular intervals in order to increase both its responsiveness and ability to resolve problems. This could include a) regular reporting against agreed benchmarks to the IASC by IASC members in the field, and b) a process of small inter-agency teams travelling to the field to carry out agreed systematic assessments before reporting back to the IASC.

2. An assessment of the contribution of agencies to coordination and coordinated outcomes should be part of the process of the mid-term CAP review. This could include agency self-assessment against agreed criteria, potentially backed up by independent evaluation.

E. Reporting Lines and Accountability

1. The IASC should agree the relationship, reporting lines and accountability of all those involved in coordination, in particular between the head of the OCHA field coordination unit and the Humanitarian Coordinator.
2. The IASC should agree who will deputise for the Humanitarian Coordinator in all instances, including a protocol for further contingency arrangements should it be necessary to further deputise for the deputy. This should exclude those with responsibilities for operational programmes where there are alternatives. This makes a strong case for the head of OCHA offices being appointed as the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator.

F. Country and Regional Structures

1. IASC members should agree to replicate the IASC at the field level in all instances.
2. IASC members should adopt the same designations of what constitutes a region as a first step to facilitate regional coordination, and should work towards having any regional structures co-located with those of other agencies.
3. IASC members should instigate more systematic consultation and communication with coordination teams in the field.

G. Advocacy

1. The IASC should form an advocacy working group to agree a broad framework for advocacy strategies towards UN Member States, donors, belligerent groups, and other parts of the UN including DPA, DPKO and the Office of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, at headquarters, country and local level. This would include responsibilities for the ERC and IASC members at headquarters and in the field. It is vital that UN agencies continue robust advocacy with donors on their obligations to respect the humanitarian principles of universality and impartiality.
2. All IASC members should collaborate with OCHA in pressing UN Member States to fund coordination – both OCHA and Humanitarian Coordinators – from assessed contributions.

H. Systemisation

1. The IASC should agree a package of coordination services and likely accompanying structures to be prepared by OCHA as the basis for coordination structures in country as standard operating procedure for OCHA. This should include agreement on the potential value of OCHA having a presence in the field at sub-office level to provide effective coordination support.
2. The IASC should make clear specifications on these coordination structures, the required competencies and the reporting relationships as part of all decisions on coordination options considered by the UN and the rest of the IASC.
3. The IASC should agree a matrix of MoUs to be negotiated to complement existing MoUs.

I. On the CAP, all IASC members should work with OCHA to:

1. Strengthen the CAP as a valuable opportunity for inter-agency analysis and strategy setting, including both operational response and advocacy strategies.
2. Require Coordinators to actively seek the involvement of NGOs and the Red Cross Movement in the analysis process, if not the fundraising strategy.
3. Improve the accuracy and transparency of the CAP's assessment of target beneficiaries to increase its use as an advocacy tool. This will help in assessing and comparing international responses to humanitarian need.
4. Give a stronger remit to Coordinators to facilitate prioritised, integrated strategies to respond to humanitarian need.
5. Under effective and accountable Coordinators in an improved system of coordination, donors should be required to place their responses to Consolidated Appeals in a single country fund – rather than funding individual agency activities – in the hands of a Coordinator.

1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In September 2000, the Policy Development Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) commissioned the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to undertake a study on humanitarian coordination in order to sharpen thinking on UN humanitarian coordination in the light of a number of inter-related processes underway in the UN. These include:

- The continuing debate on the criteria to be applied in selecting one or other of the three ‘models’ of humanitarian coordination – the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator or so-called ‘combined model’, the model where the Humanitarian Coordinator is separate from the Resident Coordinator, and the ‘lead agency model’. (The request made in mid-2000 to the Secretary-General by the then Permanent Representative of the US to the UN to employ the lead agency model more often reinvigorated the debate.)
- The report of the UN Panel on Peace Operations, referred to as the Brahimi report.⁷
- OCHA’s Change Management process instigated to strengthen OCHA’s ability to deliver on its mandate.
- Work within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the UN Secretariat to clarify relationships and responsibilities on internally displaced people (IDPs), disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), and between Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Coordinators.

1.2 Objectives and Scope of the Study

The terms of reference (ToR) state that the purpose of the study is to assist the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the IASC *‘to draw lessons from recent experiences in humanitarian coordination, with a view to better understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each coordination model in particular circumstances, leading to a clearer definition of criteria for choosing the most appropriate coordination arrangements in any given situation’* (see Annexe 1).

The study is also required to identify *‘features of coordination arrangements which were seen, by those involved, to have provided “added value”, as well as those which were felt not to have contributed to the effective coordination of the overall humanitarian operation.’*

The terms further specified the need for the study to consider the following questions:

- Is the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) perceived as an aid to effective coordination?
- Is the relationship between humanitarian, development and political/military actors seen to be coherent and mutually reinforcing?
- Is access a problem? If so, do humanitarian actors believe that current coordination arrangements ensure that the problem is being addressed as effectively as possible?
- Do all the actors feel that they have the information they need to coordinate their operations effectively with each other? How do they believe that information sharing and information management could be improved?
- Is sectoral coordination perceived to be working well?
- Has there been any attempt to introduce strategic monitoring of the humanitarian programme?
- Is the coordination model in place perceived to be appropriate by humanitarian actors?

The study team interpreted this as a task to:

- i identify what worked where, when, why and how, in order to
- ii identify the lessons for selecting humanitarian coordination arrangements in the future, based on reflections and analysis of different settings and experience.

⁷ Brahimi, L. (2000) *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations A/55/305 S/2000/809* (United Nations: New York) August.

A number of interviewees were concerned that the study's ToR neglected consideration of humanitarian coordination in natural disasters. Some challenged the rationale offered in the ToR that *'coordination arrangements in countries afflicted by natural disasters are well established...and not seen to be in need of review'*. Others added that excluding natural disasters from the focus perpetuated the division that has occurred, not least within OCHA, between those working in and on natural disasters as opposed to complex emergencies.

The study's focus was the UN and coordination of, and by, the humanitarian agencies of the UN system. Yet UN agencies do not work in a vacuum but interact with host governments and authorities, local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross Movement, governments, donor agencies and the military. In many settings, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement are major implementers of humanitarian response on the ground, with international NGOs (INGOs) sometimes acting as implementing partners of UN agencies. The experiences of all these actors – whether as coordinators or those being coordinated – were included in the study.

1.3 Methodology

This is an independent study. It was carried out by a Research Fellow and Research Associate of the ODI in London. The findings are based on three sets of sources:

- i A review of literature on humanitarian coordination. This focused on studies of humanitarian coordination arrangements and experiences in specific country settings across the world over the last 10 years, as well as relevant UN documents (see attached bibliography).
- ii Interviews with more than 250 people including past and present Humanitarian Coordinators, staff of UN agencies, staff in the UN Secretariat, donor governments, other UN Member States, the Red Cross movement, NGOs, and the military (see attached list of interviewees).
- iii Three case studies to examine in greater detail ongoing humanitarian operations. The case studies were the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Kosovo. They were selected on the basis that they offered different coordination models in different continental settings at different stages of crisis and posed different challenges. The case studies each involved a week-long field trip to interview UN agencies, NGOs, agencies from the Red Cross Movement, donors and local authorities (see Annexes).

There were three major constraints encountered by the study team:

- i It was a challenge to address the broad scope of the study and do justice to the wealth of material gathered in the time available. The literature review was conducted at speed. The three field trips provided fascinating snapshots of the challenges of different country contexts but precluded detailed analysis of coordination over time. A case study on East Timor was envisaged but proved impossible. The literature review, along with the case studies and interviews, generated a huge amount of source material.
- ii The absence of any consistently used indicators to assess what constitutes successful coordination. This study has relied on interviewees' perceptions and past studies' conclusions of what has made a difference to humanitarian response. Agreeing indicators for coordination is an area that requires further study. This is essential if coordination is to be better monitored and evaluated.
- iii A number of staff members of both OCHA in Geneva and UN agencies expressed concern that they had not been consulted on the study and its ToR prior to the study team being contracted and/or embarking on the work in October 2000. As a result they were unclear about OCHA's intentions in commissioning the study and expressed disquiet that they were expected to cooperate with a study about which they had not been effectively consulted. As a result the study was delayed while OCHA consulted with five focal points in UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and DPA and revised the ToR. The team commenced work again on 13 November 2000. In spite of this difficult beginning, the team was grateful that all IASC members collaborated fully in the study.

1.4 Structure

In **Section 2**, the report sets the context. It takes a brief look at the history of the UN's efforts to strengthen humanitarian coordination. It sets out the parameters of the coordination debate within the UN. The chapter concludes by touching on some of the challenges of the changing context that humanitarians and coordinators now face.

Section 3 presents lessons from recent coordination experience, highlighting some of the recurring obstacles to humanitarian coordination and the ways in which these obstacles are overcome.

In **Section 4**, the report presents its findings on the advantages and disadvantages of the UN's models for humanitarian coordination.

Section 5 identifies tasks, services and tools of coordination that have added value to the work of those involved in humanitarian response, and the accompanying challenges to provide them. The section also discusses some of the less successful aspects of humanitarian coordination that require reform.

Section 6 presents conclusions to the question whether the relationship between humanitarian, development, political and military actors was seen to be coherent and mutually reinforcing, and touches on some of the implications of the Brahimi report.

Section 7 draws together findings and recommendations about OCHA's role.

Section 8 sets out recommendations to improve coordination.

Annexes include the ToR, a matrix of current coordination arrangements, short reports on each of the three case studies and a list of interviewees. Finally there is a selected bibliography.

2: COORDINATION: AN OVERVIEW

2.1 Historical Overview

In the wake of the Nigerian civil war, an earthquake in Peru and the combination of war and natural disaster in Bangladesh, all of which occurred between 1967 and 1971, General Assembly Resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971 set in place a comprehensive framework to organise the UN humanitarian response. The Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) was created 'to mobilise, direct and coordinate relief' in response to requests from countries with people requiring relief assistance.

During the 1980s as the UN found itself obliged to offer humanitarian assistance in situations of internal armed conflict, a 'lead agency' was sometimes appointed from among the principal humanitarian agencies. In other situations special ad hoc coordination bodies were established, such as the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) set up in 1984 to coordinate responses for crisis in the Horn of Africa, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA) established in 1988.

In December 1991, after 17 General Assembly resolutions and decisions seeking to strengthen disaster response, a raft of criticisms of UNDRO's record,⁸ a growing concern that ad hoc arrangements for humanitarian coordination were unsatisfactory, and the Gulf war, the General Assembly passed another resolution with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN's humanitarian operations in the field, General Assembly Resolution 46/182.

Many of the features of resolution 46/182 echoed those of Resolution 2816. Resolution 46/182 created the post of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the IASC. It also proposed a central funding mechanism – the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) – under the authority of the Secretary-General. This would hold \$50m of voluntary contributions to be replenished by responses to a Consolidated Appeal in order to ensure adequate resources in the initial phase of a humanitarian response. The resolution also proposed that the UN should build up a central register of all specialised personnel. But in other ways Resolution 46/182 was a backward step, for instance, in dropping the reference to 'direction' in the earlier resolution.⁹

In 1992, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), with the ERC also serving as Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs. Then in 1994 the IASC approved the ToR for Humanitarian Coordinators who would, upon the occurrence of a complex emergency in a country, be appointed by the ERC on behalf of the Secretary-General to be the senior UN official on the ground in charge of coordinating international humanitarian assistance. It was agreed that the UN Resident Coordinator serving in the affected country would 'normally' become the Humanitarian Coordinator. However, two other possibilities were also foreseen: that a Humanitarian Coordinator might be appointed separately from the Resident Coordinator (or in a situation in which there was no Resident Coordinator), or that a 'lead agency' might be designated, whose local country director would exercise the functions of Humanitarian Coordinator.

In 1997, the IASC reviewed the various coordination mechanisms and reaffirmed that the current Resident Coordinator should be confirmed as Humanitarian Coordinator if s/he has the necessary profile. Otherwise there should be an immediate replacement to fulfil the combined function. Only in exceptional cases where the ERC and IASC determined that the one person could not carry out the two functions should a separate Humanitarian Coordinator be appointed. The IASC affirmed that the Humanitarian Coordinator is accountable to the ERC and should not have operational responsibilities. Indeed the ERC and DHA were urged to divest themselves of operational tasks (for example, demining, demobilisation, natural disaster mitigation, logistics and transport).

⁸ For insights into UNDRO's record, see Righter, R. (1995) *Utopia Lost: The United Nations and World Order*. (Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC).

⁹ Also, whereas Resolution 2816 had called for the Secretary-General to appoint a disaster relief coordinator at USG level to report directly to him, 46/182 called for the appointment of a high-level relief official to be appointed as ERC with 'direct access' to the Secretary-General. (However, in the event, the ERC was appointed at the USG level.) See Ingram, J. (1993) 'The Future Architecture for International Humanitarian Assistance' in Weiss, T. & Minear, L. (eds) *Humanitarianism Across Borders – Sustaining Civilians in Times of War* (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder).

As part of the Secretary-General's reform programme of 1997, OCHA replaced DHA. OCHA had a streamlined mandate, and was divested of responsibility for DHA's operational activities. Its core functions are coordination of humanitarian response to complex emergencies and disasters – by ensuring, through the IASC, that the appropriate mechanisms are on the ground – advocacy, and policy development in support of the Secretary-General and the IASC.

Today, the combined Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator model exists in 15 countries, the lead agency model in two countries,¹⁰ and the Humanitarian Coordinator separate from the Resident Coordinator in four countries.¹⁰ OCHA field coordination units, all funded through voluntary contributions, provide support to those with Humanitarian Coordinator responsibilities. In 2001, OCHA will have field coordination units in 23 countries.

It is these arrangements that have been established to coordinate the humanitarian response of the UN system, composed of the six key actors of UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, WHO and UNDP. However, each of the six organisations has been set up by its own treaty, is governed by its own inter-governmental organ that provides overall policy supervision, and is financed almost entirely outside the UN budget largely through voluntary contributions from governments. Although the Secretary-General formally appoints the heads of UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and UNDP, he does so only on the basis of approval by major donor governments. The Secretary-General has no legal authority over WHO and FAO.

2.2 Defining Coordination

The changing arrangements for humanitarian coordination described above have been accompanied by their fair share of definitions of coordination. For a start, there is the IASC's distinction between operational and strategic coordination.¹¹ Yet in practice on the ground, distinctions between operational and strategic coordination appear to serve little purpose (except for those who use them in inter-agency arguments about who is responsible for what). Furthermore, for the study team, the distinctions reinforce the impression that there are areas of humanitarian response that are unrelated to strategy and all that implies by way of analysis, goals and monitoring.

Past studies of humanitarian coordination in complex emergencies offer a plethora of definitions. While the study team did not set out with a definition of coordination, it concluded that one of the definitions used repeatedly in past studies stood out as one that could prove useful to the UN:

Coordination is the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilising resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labour, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership.¹²

This definition captures key elements of humanitarian coordination and emphasises a number of coordination functions that this study concludes are all too often missing or weak in UN humanitarian coordination. These include:

- The importance of using policy instruments in systematic ways – that, is in an organised way according to established procedures rather than in an ad hoc manner;
- The emphasis on cohesion, bringing elements of a response together;
- The focus on planning, managing information, accountability, functional divisions of labour and sustaining frameworks with political authorities.

These points recur throughout this report.

¹⁰ These figures are subject to debate and verification, given disputes about lead agencies.

¹¹ For definition, see the IASC (1998a) IASC Recommendations Related to the Review of the Capacity of the United Nations System for Humanitarian Action.

¹² Minear, L., Chelliah, U., Crisp, J., Mackinlay, J. & Weiss, T. (1992) *UN Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis 1990–1992* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 13.

2.3 The Parameters of the Coordination Debate in the UN

Within the UN, perhaps the sole aspect of coordination that is not contentious is the question *why* coordinate. The answers inevitably focus on maximising the positive impact of humanitarian assistance and protection for those in need. By contrast, defining *how* coordination is done and *by whom* provokes fierce debate.

Among the words used to define coordination were coherence, compatibility, cooperation, collaboration, consultation, concertation, integration, harmonisation, synchronisation, control and management.

From these responses and past studies of coordination, tensions emerge. Are we talking about a minimal activity that prevents duplication and overlap, or a more integrating activity that seeks to harmonise responses as part of a single programme or strategy that becomes more than the sum of its parts? These differences reveal one of the unresolved issues that plague UN coordination debates and efforts.

These tensions are linked to the associated controversies about how coordination gets done, and by whom. UN personnel repeatedly insisted that coordination depends on consensus and that any imposition is inappropriate. At the same time all those with, or who have had, coordination responsibilities, expressed frustration with the difficulty – or impossibility – of coordinating without the means to enforce others to coordinate.

In the same vein, as discussed further below, wherever UN agencies have interpreted their coordination role as a remit to impose on others this has generated fierce and widespread resentment across the UN system. This resentment animates the debate among UN agencies about UN coordination models and the question of who within the UN should coordinate.

These tensions and realities set the parameters of the debate within the UN about humanitarian coordination and generate the questions that underpin this report. In a humanitarian system that gives authority to no one, how does coordination get done? One of the perennial questions is how to coordinate those unwilling to be coordinated.

2.4 The Challenges of a Changing Context

This study was required to focus primarily on the conduct of UN coordination within the humanitarian system. Towards the end of this report, the study addresses the question posed by the ToR on the interface of the humanitarian system with political and military actors. Notwithstanding the need for improved performance among the humanitarians, such an ‘intra-humanitarian’ focus can obscure the significance of political and military actors internationally and within recipient countries in determining the extent of humanitarian space and influencing the conduct of humanitarian action.

The role of host governments and belligerents in facilitating or obstructing humanitarian action constitutes the familiar, pivotal challenge for humanitarian coordination, albeit one that frequently disappears in intra-UN debates on coordination. The frequent absence or weakness of government in complex emergency settings creates the coordination challenge in the first place. Humanitarians are required to substitute for the process of policy prioritisation and implementation that is the role of government, with no higher authority in country to mediate when consensus cannot be found.

The complexity of the causes and effects of complex political emergencies, their punishing consequences for human lives and livelihoods, the speed at which events often take place, the huge numbers of people in need, and the insecurity facing civilians and those that seek to help them are also familiar challenges to humanitarian action and its coordination.

Other new challenges are also emerging. For instance, while donors call for coordination, statistics on humanitarian assistance show that the management of resources for humanitarian assistance has become increasingly fragmented, and humanitarian response is increasingly bilateral. In 1988, around 45% of global humanitarian assistance was given in multilateral contributions to the UN, while bilateral donors retained half of the total. The share of the European Commission (EC), meanwhile, was 5%. By the late 1990s, bilateral donors controlled 62% of humanitarian assistance, the UN received 27%, and the EC's share had risen to 11%. The earmarking of funds to specific activities in a particular country by donors was also up by a third over the decade.

Furthermore, the significance of NGOs continues to grow. In 1990, ECHO channelled 30% of its funds to NGOs. By 1999 this had risen to more than 65% of a budget that had also increased.¹³ By the late 1990s, most OECD member countries were channelling at least a quarter of their emergency assistance through NGOs.¹⁴ Between 1992 and 1999, on average 40% of the CAP was disbursed through multilateral channels while 22% went through NGOs and 13% through the Red Cross family. Yet UN agencies also fund NGOs to implement programmes. For example, in 1997, NGOs were the channel for \$500m of WFP relief commodities and more than half of UNHCR's budget.¹⁵

However, contributions to the CAP have been falling – from \$1.96bn in 1994 to \$1.4bn in 1999, with the share of requirements met on a steady downward trend from 80% in 1994 to 64% in 1999.¹⁶ Yet more starkly, humanitarian aid as share of wealth of the world's richest countries is falling – by a third over the decade. The market should not be shrinking. The human reality behind that statistic demands powerful advocacy by the UN system and humanitarians more widely to ensure that governments uphold their humanitarian obligations.

At the same time, donors are making greater demands of humanitarian actors to uphold performance standards and increase accountability. Some donors are increasing their capacity in the field to scrutinise humanitarian operations, and some also demonstrate increasing interest in coordination at the field level. While the vast majority of this study's interviewees stressed that the UN retains pre-eminent responsibility for coordination for the benefit of the entire humanitarian community, both case studies suggest there are some donors – the EC in particular – who are prepared to take a more proactive role in coordination, potentially in competition with the UN.¹⁷ Such actors have the capacity and interest to fill vacuums left by the UN where it has been discredited or perceived to be ineffective.

In certain settings, donor interest has coincided with political agendas to push humanitarian aid to contribute to broader political strategies. The Brahimi report, with its recommendations on the role of humanitarian aid in the as yet undefined activity of peacebuilding, represents the latest attempt to explicitly coopt humanitarian action to deliver on wider political goals of peace and security. (For further discussion of this see Section 6).

The Brahimi report also has other implications. For instance, should its recommendations that the UN Security Council (UNSC) sanction more robust mandates for UN peace operations be implemented, it could become yet more difficult for UN humanitarian agencies to assert their humanitarian identity. This could complicate coordination as NGOs and others feel forced to distance themselves explicitly from a non-neutral UN. Conversely, if the report has the effect of 'raising the bar too high' and the Security Council remains resistant to mandating and providing such 'robust forces', humanitarian actors look likely to be left filling peacekeeping and political vacuums in situations of little strategic interest.

Such settings – that is situations of conflict and post-conflict – also look set to be neglected by development actors outside the UN. UN discussion on 'bridging the gap' between relief and development may be intense, but there is little sign that other development actors are 'mainstreaming conflict' into their analysis of development aid and policy. The focus of the World Bank, among others, on countries that are 'good policy performers' begs the question about what happens to the bad performers. It seems that one answer is that the 'bad performers' are 'consigned' to humanitarian responses and actors, while the rest of the world is uninterested.

¹³ See Development Initiatives (2000) *Global Humanitarian Assistance 2000. An Independent Report Commissioned by the IASC* (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, OCHA: Geneva) May.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 27.

¹⁶ In particular, this represents a significant fall in the incomes of UNHCR and WFP. See Development Initiatives (2000) op. cit.

¹⁷ The role of the EC in the Somalia Aid Coordination Body, and the ECHO representative in North Kivu were striking examples. Another example is ECHO's *cellule de crise* established in collaboration with the Rwandan government in 1993.

3: OBSTACLES AND INCENTIVES TO COORDINATION

This section provides an overview of some of the major themes and lessons from past studies, interviews and case studies which are elaborated through the rest of the report. It then looks at the structural, institutional and management obstacles to coordination before presenting some of the ways these obstacles are overcome.

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Themes from Studies of Complex Emergencies

Among the recurring themes of past studies of coordination are turf battles, empire-building, overlapping and conflicting mandates, and ad hoc arrangements all of which prevent effective response. Tensions between staff in the field and headquarters, with each accusing the other of thwarting coordination efforts, recur, as do criticisms of poor information flow and conflicting internal administrative procedures that hamper inter-agency collaboration or prevent flexibility and fast response. The lack of overall strategy or principled approaches is a common feature, as is the absence of integrated programmes or effective joint implementation. Many studies emphasise tensions between relief and development agencies, humanitarians and peacekeepers, and (consequently) the importance of personalities in making the system work, if at all.

3.1.2 Themes from Interviews

In interviews with many UN staff, the discussion of what works frequently elided into debate about coordination models and the link between coordination and operationality. A refrain among a striking number of UN interviewees in headquarters was the need to respond to what the donors want. This reveals the push for profile in order to maintain or increase funding in the competitive donor funding market. Yet these same donors are recognised as behaving in contradictory ways, whether through their behaviour on agency executive boards, cherry picking in the CAP, or in the trend towards bilateral control of resources.

Interviewees spoke of institutional cultures where cooperation is neither required nor rewarded. The study team gleaned a distinct impression of agencies mimicking the behaviour of UN Member States, guarding their agency 'sovereignty' against perceived assaults by others. The content and tone of many of the interviews in UN agency headquarters painted a picture of agencies and individuals unwilling to be coordinated; to cede authority to another.

3.1.3 Themes from Case Studies

Case studies brought the picture of inter-agency tensions into sharper focus – although they also revealed important examples of effective coordination. In particular, the case studies highlighted how 'flexibility' was a mixed blessing – while allowing room for innovation by exceptional individuals it also muddles lines of accountability and allows tensions and conflicts to go unresolved and to fester. Case studies and interviews stressed that ad interim arrangements can corrode relationships, morale and performance.

The lack of clear ToR, reporting relationships and consultation lines, as well as weak or non-existent guidance and induction on key job responsibilities, was a theme that emerged throughout the case study interviews. Not surprisingly, all too often this resulted in a lack of clarity to those outside the UN about who was responsible for what. Meanwhile many in the UN appeared preoccupied with intra-UN concerns.

3.2 The Obstacles to Coordination

3.2.1 Structural Obstacles

The design of the 'system'

The primary obstacle to coordination of UN humanitarian agencies is the design of the UN 'system'. In fact, although all UN agencies share a link with the UN Charter, there is little about their structure that is systematic. That is, the system of UN humanitarian agencies has not been designed along the lines of good management or bureaucratic functionality. Rather, if there is a logic that underpins their provenance and accountability structures, established at different points in time, it is primarily a political one: Member States have created and structured agencies and organisations in accordance with their political interests.

In the face of the potential incursions on sovereignty inherent in the UN Charter, or key humanitarian conventions such as those on the rights of refugees or women and children, governments have ensured that through their governance structures and executive boards, UN agencies remain within their control.¹⁸ Thus the behaviour of UN agencies cannot be divorced from the actions of UN Member States, whether on agency executive boards,¹⁹ or the political pressure exerted in particular on the Secretary-General and UNDP, where many decisions about coordination ultimately reside.²⁰

Yet rather than seeking to overcome the political pressures that come from their separate governance structures in the pursuit of coordinated humanitarian response, it seems that the UN agencies mimic the behaviour of the Member States by jealously guarding their agency 'sovereignty'.

Countering the push for profile: the influence of the contract culture and the market

As little funding for humanitarian response or coordination comes from assessed contributions, UN agencies are forced into the situation of competing for the same donor funds.²¹ Competitiveness has also therefore been built into the system.²² Agencies perceive the donor market to be shrinking, as donors increasingly favour bilateral over multilateral channels for humanitarian assistance. This funding environment requires agencies to push for profile, which corrodes relationships and coordination at all levels.²³ In the words of one of the most senior interviewees that the team met: *'There is more competition in the UN than in the private sector.'* Ironically, it was a donor who captured the point: *'The fight for visibility is an obstacle for coordination.'*

In this context, it was clear from interviewees that OCHA faces a vicious circle: the more it raises its profile to attract funds and the more that donors support OCHA, the more its role with the agencies is undermined as OCHA is seen as a competitor. As one UN agency interviewee remarked: *'OCHA exists because donors like coordination, but agencies do not like OCHA.'* This environment that makes market competitors out of humanitarian collaborators is a fundamental obstacle to coordination.

Donors thwart coordination

While donors are among those that most vociferously demand coordination, donor earmarking, micromanaging, visibility concerns and political agendas all confound humanitarian coordination. Donor responses to consolidated appeals are a notorious example of how they undermine faltering UN efforts towards integrated responses to humanitarian need. One interviewee suggested that donor support for OCHA is disingenuous in that it satisfies bureaucratic demands for 'tidiness' in the process of reporting to ministers and the public, but does not reflect a commensurate commitment from donors for coordinated action. Interviewees and studies remarked that donors' behaviour on executive boards is inconsistent with their statements and funding decisions.²⁴

¹⁸ On the diverse ways that governments retain this control, see Gordenker, L. (1998) 'Clash and Harmony in Promoting Peace: Overview' in Whitman, J. (ed) 'Peacekeeping and the UN Agencies' *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1998; and Ingram, J. (1993) op. cit.

¹⁹ NB: G8 members feature more prominently on these executive boards than G77 members do.

²⁰ Although the Secretary-General formally appoints the heads of UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, he does so only on the basis of approval by major donor governments.

²¹ UNHCR, UNEP, UNCHS (Habitat) and UNRWA have portions of their budget that come from the regular budget with the rest being voluntarily funded. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF are entirely voluntarily funded.

²² Childers, E. & Urquhart, B. (1991) op. cit., p.53.

²³ For an example of the tensions between coordination and fundraising pressures, see UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (1998) 'Report of the Tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) Study of the Great Lakes Emergency Operation, September 1996–1997' p. 4.

²⁴ For example, see Gordenker, L. (1998) op. cit.

One study suggests that for all their rhetoric favouring coordination, donors may actually tolerate poor coordination because to do otherwise would require them to coordinate better.²⁵ This study's evidence suggests that donors themselves have proved weak at coordination. Donor involvement in coordination structures such as the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB) in Nairobi does not appear to have increased donor coherence, funding, or political action but has risked skewing humanitarian agencies' decisions in favour of political considerations. Interviewees and studies suggested this was also the case for the Afghan Support Group and the Emergency Management Group in Albania.²⁶

Although NGOs and Red Cross agencies are by no means immune from the pressure to raise funds, it was striking that UN interviewees were the most preoccupied with attracting donor approval. A repeated refrain among UN interviewees was *'If the donors like it'*. This may be commensurate with their more governmental nature compared with the Red Cross or NGOs. Yet given the multiple ways in which donors thwart coordination, UN agencies exacerbate the problem when they focus on competing for funds rather than lobbying donors to reform the system.

3.2.2 Institutional Obstacles

Coordination and cooperation are neither required nor rewarded

One of the key institutional obstacles to coordination is the strength of UN staff loyalty to their agencies rather than to the UN family. Institutional loyalty is not inherently a bad thing, nor is it unique to the UN. Yet the study team was struck by how often expressed loyalty to an agency was accompanied by at least criticism, if not strong denouncement, of other UN agencies.²⁷ Within the UN it appears that institutional loyalty propagates inter-agency competition.²⁸

This competition is animated and exacerbated by the fact that coordination and cooperation are rarely required or rewarded among staff. Interviewees and studies stated that personal professional progress was linked to performing well for one's agency, not cooperating with others.²⁹ Interviewees across the UN system expressed unwillingness to release their 'best people' for secondment into coordination functions, preferring to retain them to deliver their agency's mandate. One important justification given for this is the belief that maintaining effective agency operations has the greatest direct impact on beneficiaries – the fundamental concern for any humanitarian agency. Yet the task of effective coordination is to increase the impact of the overall response and requires skilled and competent people who are rewarded for their work. Requiring staff to coordinate and seconding staff to coordination are essential to the performance of the system.

Coordinators are not 'neutral': the link between coordination and operationality

A strong theme in interviews was the importance attached to coordinators not having vested institutional interests – referred to as being 'neutral' in inter-agency terms. For many, such interests derived from coordinators having to combine responsibility for operations and coordination. As one UN staff member commented, *'You cannot be a player and a referee.'*

For adherents to this view, operationality – that is, having responsibilities or programmes that directly provide assistance to beneficiaries – is seen as a distraction that precludes coordinators from providing effective support to enable others to achieve their goals. It hinders the coordinating agency's operational programme. It was also argued that only non-operational coordinators should monitor adherence to standards which are critical to effectiveness and accountability.

Despite the widespread emphasis on the 'neutrality' of coordinators, there were some interviewees who maintained that far from being a distraction to coordination, operationality is key to having clout and credibility as a coordinator.

²⁵ Minear, L. (1998) op. cit.

²⁶ For example, see Telford, J. (2000) 'Coordination in the 1999 Kosovo Refugee Emergency: The Emergency Management Group (EMG), Albania – An Evaluation', 31 January 2000, contracted for DFID.

²⁷ The team was also surprised by the emphasis on money in fostering loyalty. Many UN interviewees articulated the view that whoever pays the piper calls the tune. Consequently, the fact that OCHA is not paying all Humanitarian Coordinators was perceived to undermine their accountability and loyalty to the ERC.

²⁸ For a description of inter-agency rivalries within the Red Cross Movement see Anema, F., Stone, M. & Wissink, H. (2000) 'An Examination of the Role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Response to the Balkans Crisis' (ICRC: Geneva) p. vi.

²⁹ The US General Accounting Office report that roughly a third of UN staff in the field *'did not have a job expectation of cooperation with other agencies...According to these officials their career, promotion, and reward paths are through their parent organisations.'* See US General Accounting Office (2000) 'Report to Congressional Requesters – United Nations: Reform Initiatives Have Strengthened Operations, but Overall Objectives Have Not yet Been Achieved'.

The debate appeared to be animated by agencies staking their claims to coordination roles, for all of this has a direct bearing on particular coordination models (discussed in Section 4). After all, everyone seemed clear that the lesson of DHA's experience was the incompatibility of coordination and operational responsibilities and, as stated earlier, the IASC has already agreed that humanitarian coordinators should not have operational responsibilities.

Thus the prevailing view is that operationality and coordination must be separated. There are important examples of individual coordinators from operational agencies who have garnered the trust of others. Yet the critical success factor for these individuals is that they cast their loyalty system-wide. It appears that the UN system depends on producing a crop of individuals who stay loyal to their agency at the lower and middle levels of their career path, but then somehow shed these affiliations further up the ranks.³⁰ Were the UN system able to foster system-wide affiliation and loyalty more widely, the need for 'neutrality' might be diluted. But as the system is currently characterised, coordinators that have operational responsibilities and thus vested institutional interests are an institutional obstacle to coordination.

The UN is preoccupied with itself

Donors, NGOs, and host governments were all clear that the UN has a critical role to play in coordination for the benefit of the entire humanitarian community. However, some within the UN appeared less clear on this point. Where this results in a preoccupation among UN staff with UN affairs, and subsequent exclusion or neglect of international and local NGOs from the UN's coordination efforts, this had a clear negative impact on coordination in the eyes of interviewees.³¹

Some NGOs feel they get little return for the investment they make in UN-led coordination processes and structures. In the words of the NGO consortium ICVA: *'The UN is unable to offer services and attitudes commensurate with the partnership demanded by NGOs.'*³² In some instances, NGOs have established their own coordination structures that exclude the UN.³³ However, more often, NGO coordination structures have to an extent facilitated coordination with the UN system, for example, in Kosovo and FRY (excluding Kosovo).

The propensity of institutions to be preoccupied with internal affairs is not confined to the UN. Interviewees stressed that the Red Cross and large NGO federations experience as many problems collaborating inside their own organisations as between themselves and others. Nor are NGOs either homogenous nor consistent in their decisions about how they relate to the UN in all instances – which is in turn a source of frustration to UN agencies. Yet given that the rest of the system is looking to the UN to coordinate, when coordinators are preoccupied with intra-UN concerns and neglect key humanitarian actors, coordination is likely to suffer.

Administrative procedures prevent fast response and collaboration

In contrast to the demand of emergency situations for rapid response, time and again reports and interviewees pointed out that the time lag in deploying key staff and structures impaired coordination.³⁴ For example, although the March 1993 CAP for Rwanda proposed the creation of a humanitarian coordination unit in Kigali, it was not until January 1994 that staff took up position in the DHA unit within UNDP.

The clash of administrative procedures also impairs response and hampers coordination. In Somalia, the incompatibility of agency procedures at headquarters, for example, on contracts and disbursements, was cited as one of the biggest problems for the UN Country Team, fuelling competition over scarce aid resources. The Brahimi report also focuses on information technology problems. This is not the sole preserve of the UN. In Kosovo, different financial systems impaired cooperation between the ICRC and Red Cross.³⁵ However, it is a particular feature of the UN agencies as a result of their structures and staffing, and acts as another institutional obstacle to coordination.³⁶

³⁰ A notable example of this was the decision by Catherine Bertini, when designated the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, to report to the ERC a.i. to demonstrate her commitment to serve the system rather than her agency.

³¹ See Annexe 2 for an example of this, including the contrast between OCHA's engagement with NGOs.

³² See ICVA (2000b).

³³ See Atkinson, P. & Leader, N. (2000) *The 'Joint Policy of Operations' and the Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operations' in Liberia* (London: ODI) HPG Report 3.

³⁴ The ECOSOC 2000 humanitarian segment asked for application of special administrative rules and procedures to allow the UN to provide personnel and logistics to respond to humanitarian needs.

³⁵ Anema et al (2000) op. cit.

³⁶ For elaboration of the challenges posed, see Ingram (1993) op.cit.

3.2.3 Management Obstacles

Absence of clear accountability for coordination

Past studies, cases studies and interviewees all presented a picture of coordination arrangements dogged by unclear roles, reporting lines and accountabilities.

Clear reporting lines are critical to effective daily management, accountability and the loyalties they signify. Yet in the DRC, many senior officials were baffled and frustrated by the maze of reporting lines and lack of clarity about how they related to each other.³⁷ For one example among many, the Senior Humanitarian Adviser for the east of the country was required to report in four directions, but none of those included the Provincial Coordinator. Unsurprisingly, donors, the Red Cross and NGOs alike all stated that they too were unclear who had responsibility for what inside the UN. Elsewhere, senior individuals with coordination responsibilities confessed that they had ignored unclear multiple reporting lines established at the highest levels and had simplified their own reporting relationships.

In both the DRC and Somalia, it was striking how a proliferation of coordination structures diffused accountability for coordination. In the SACB, it was unclear that the buck finally stopped with the Executive Committee. The absence of systematic consultation procedures between staff in Nairobi and their colleagues in Somalia created an impression that few in Nairobi felt accountable for the impact on the ground of their decisions and actions.

Regional coordination structures have also muddled the water where there has been lack of clarity over jurisdiction between regional and country coordinators and a profusion of senior officials, for example, in Rwanda in 1994 and the Horn of Africa in 2000.³⁸

Holding humanitarian actors more accountable for their contribution to coordination is essential. The absence of consistently used quantitative or qualitative indicators to measure the quality of coordination is one factor that impedes this accountability process. Yet unclear allocation of responsibility and therefore accountability is another obstacle to coordination.

Unclear guidance and induction

Case studies and interviewees revealed that a huge range of personnel, from senior officials to junior staff, were sent into the field with little or no guidance in ToR or inductions on matters fundamental to their role. As one UN interviewee commented, *'People are tossed into the field and told to get on with the nebulous concept of coordination. If people stay on for two, three, five years, [only then do] they find out about advocacy [or] principles.'* The Brahimi report offers further evidence of the minimal briefing, policy and strategic guidance provided to Force Commanders or heads of mission.

There has been some progress, however. The Note of Guidance on the relationship between SRSGs, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators is one example, although it remains to be seen what impact this will have in practice. The study team was impressed by FAO's recently instituted process whereby its most experienced staff travel to teach younger personnel to enable them to benefit from their experience. Yet these examples appear to be the exception to the rule that unclear guidance and induction constitute another obstacle to coordination.

Flexibility masks 'adhocracy'

By definition, complex emergencies are complicated, precluding a 'one size fits all' response. They require flexible responses that adapt to the precise demands of the situation. Such wisdom is invoked to characterise how the UN responds to such crises. Indeed, one study praised the 'adaptivity' of the UN system.³⁹ Yet this study team concluded that the term flexibility is often used as a more flattering synonym for 'adhocracy'. As such, it is used to justify poor management, decisions not made, conflicts not resolved, and the influence of politics on management decisions.

³⁷ For a similar example of conflict arising from lack of clear relationships, see Ball, N. & Campbell, K. (1998) 'Complex Crisis and Complex Peace – Humanitarian Coordination in Angola' (Policy, Information and Advocacy Division, OCHA: New York), and Donini et al (1996) op. cit.

³⁸ On Rwanda, see Borton, J. (1996) op. cit.

³⁹ See Lautze, S., Jones, B. and Duffield, M. (1998) 'Strategic Humanitarian Coordination in the Great Lakes Region, 1996–1997: An Independent Study for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee', (Policy, Information and Advocacy Division, OCHA: New York).

The lack of clear accountability or guidance highlighted above are examples of this adhococracy. The IASC's management model put in place to effect response to IDPs, and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration, is another case in point. It appears to be a continual process of deferring decisions about divisions of labour to another body whether upwards, for example, to the Deputy Secretary-General, or downwards, to the UN Country Team. The fact that the highest levels of the UN have also been responsible for ad hoc developments reinforces the impression that political concerns prevail over effective performance, management and meritocracy.⁴⁰

One of the apparent ironies of 'flexible' arrangements is that they are both vulnerable to be changed at any moment, and may be left to fester with dysfunctions going ignored. This was particularly true of the ad interim arrangements encountered by the team. Ad interim arrangements within the UN dilute and undercut the authority of the individual, the position and the structures. Individuals in ad interim positions face an uphill struggle to convince others of their legitimacy and authority; where they fail to persuade, the resistance to coordinate can degenerate into in-fighting and freelancing by agencies and individuals. Clearly this corrodes relationships, morale and performance. The string of humanitarian coordinators in the DRC is a pre-eminent example of the negative impact of *ad interim* measures. Agencies in the DRC referred to the '*HC ad hoc*'.

Such adhococracy puts a huge onus on individuals to work things out on the ground. On the positive side, such adhococracy – where requirements or systems are not set in stone – offers room for innovation. Negatively, the weak management associated with adhococracy allows the incompetent or malign to under perform or create chaos.⁴¹ As not every situation is entirely different, it involves a lot of reinventing of the wheel, which of course is an unnecessary effort. As one interviewee commented, '*Everywhere I go the UN is different and I am having to adapt to the UN.*'

On the evidence of past studies, case studies and interviews, such adhococracy seems to be built into the UN system. As such, it appears to be both a product and a cause of resistance to coordination.

3.3 So When Does Coordination Happen?

This, then, is the picture gleaned by the team of some of the lessons from recent coordination experience. However, these same studies, interviews and case studies also show that over a decade there have been efforts to make coordination more systematic. More effort is now put into deciding coordination arrangements. Many 'habits' of coordination have been regularised. The CAP and the IASC were the most cited evidence of such habits, and are examples of fora in which joint action has become unquestioned practice.

Through the case studies, the team found some examples of collaboration and coordination of the responses to people in need on the ground. So the question is what are the ingredients in these successful examples? How have they dealt with the obstacles outlined above? The following section sets out some of the team's findings on the factors that promote humanitarian coordination.

3.4 The Ingredients of Success

3.4.1 Where Contexts are Conducive to Coordination

One conducive context is one in which **relationships have been built over time**. A striking example of this was in Gedo region in Somalia where three NGOs had gone beyond coordination to establish a consortium to maximise economies of scale when hiring consultants for the training of their staff in health programmes. The close cooperation in Nairobi of the organisations' managers and relationships established by staff through shared use of one agency's guest house as a key staging post for the cross-border operation were cited as the factors behind this.

⁴⁰ For one example among many, see Minear et al (1992) on the confusion that arose during the Gulf War when UNHCR's designation as lead agency was followed by the creation of the Office of the Executive Delegate (OED) and the appointment of an OED Coordinator in Baghdad in addition to there being a Resident Coordinator in Iraq with counterparts across the region.

⁴¹ The Brahimi report is extremely robust on the necessity for the Secretary-General and his senior staff to be more systematic in removing incompetent staff and rewarding excellence.

In a similar vein, **shared technical expertise**, often a feature of coordination at the sectoral level, facilitates communication and increases focus on how to achieve shared goals rather than agency profiles. One important study of coordination in the Great Lakes highlighted the positive effects of technical staff working together to overcome obstacles.⁴²

3.4.2 Where Incentives are Increased

Agencies have to work together in the interests of security...

The pressure to sustain humanitarian space in the face of a threat to, or abuse of, aid, or the realisation of the potential negative impact of aid, were factors that spurred humanitarian actors to coordinate in Liberia in 1996, and in Sudan and Somalia. Threats to agencies themselves also sparked coordination in these instances.

...or to achieve access to beneficiaries

In some large-scale emergencies the initial period is chaotic. However, in East Timor in 1999 and Rwanda in 1994, agencies' keenness to know what others were doing and concern to get advice about who best to help spurred on coordination. In East Timor, because all agencies went in at the same time there were no pre-established hierarchies and all agencies encountered the same problems in trying to find housing and office space. There was thus a compelling need to coordinate for effective operations.

Donor or media scrutiny requires or supports coordination

The reverse of donors thwarting coordination is concern by donors to see coordination being done. The media can act as a key conduit for this information, particularly in settings where donors do not have presence. Donors on the ground can demand it for themselves, such as ECHO in North Kivu or donor members of the SACB.

Coordinators are vested with elements of command or control

The study found a recurring paradox among interviewees: a repeated insistence on inter-agency consensus-building but implicit recognition that timely, effective humanitarian response requires power of command.

This is borne out by past studies. The team was struck by the number of studies of coordination considered successful over the last 10 years in which the coordinators had been vested with elements of command or control at critical stages in the response. Through control over funds and/or access, these coordinators were able to buttress their claim to authority.

In the Great Lakes, ECHO's decision in the 1994/95 period to channel its funds to NGOs through UNHCR underpinned UNHCR's claims to coordinate. In other cases, coordinators have, in effect, been able to offer a financial reward to participants in coordination. In Angola, the quick disbursing mechanism of the UN Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit for Angola (UCAH) funded by SIDA was very successful at providing NGOs with seed money, so strengthening UCAH's coordination role.⁴³ In the DRC, OCHA's \$4m Emergency Humanitarian Initiative (EHI) fund has enabled it to support logistics and provide non-food items for UN agencies and NGOs in a way critical to their credibility. Indeed, the CERF was partly set up to give DHA some 'power of the purse'.⁴⁴

One of the pre-eminent examples of the coordinator having control of access was UNHCR's coordination role in the refugee camps of Ngara, Tanzania in 1994. With the backing of the Tanzanian government (as well as the major donors), the agency was able to limit the number of NGOs in Benaco camp. The limited number of personnel and agencies and the '*incredible individuals*' coordinating engendered '*an unusually collaborative approach contributing to a highly effective response*'.⁴⁵ In East Timor in 1999, the Humanitarian Coordinator could influence access to the island, which contributed to the authority of the coordination services.

⁴² UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (1998) op. cit.

⁴³ UCAH and UN agencies reviewed NGO project proposals and referred successful ones to SIDA, which generally approved funding less than two weeks after submission. Agencies had a high likelihood of further funding once they had established a track record.

⁴⁴ Ingram (1993) op. cit.

⁴⁵ Borton, J. (1996) op. cit.

There are important caveats. In the cases cited as the most effective, it was important that other participants welcomed these elements of command as legitimate. Such legitimacy derived from how these elements of control were wielded – that is, whether they were accompanied by coordinators who demonstrated a mentality of inclusion and service orientation. What the examples also show is the importance of the quality of the decisions made. Thus coordination with command maximises its claim to legitimacy if it is coordination at the service of the system with the aim of improving the response to people in need. This is discussed further in the section on leadership immediately below.

3.4.3 Where the Coordination on offer Adds Value

It is widely agreed that effective coordination must add value to a humanitarian operation by facilitating better quality and more effective and efficient responses to help those in need than would be done in its absence. Some of the tasks and techniques that add value are set out in Section 5. A crucial ingredient is leadership.

The importance of leadership

Command alone – except from the Secretary-General or an agency head – does not work in a decentralised system that zealously protects consensus as the basis for inter-agency relations. But experience suggests that the UN's decentralised system can cohere around a leader who provides direction in an inclusive way for the benefit of the system and beyond. Such leaders have come closest to the exercise of authority that is a vital ingredient to go beyond mandate-driven activities to achieve more integrated humanitarian responses. Leadership is the common ingredient in the experiences of humanitarian coordination judged by interviewees and studies as the most successful.⁴⁶

The examples all contain at least one of two key leadership elements: effective managerial skills, and/or analytical skills. Some leader-coordinators have command at their fingertips, or at least elements of it, such as control over funding and access. For others, their leadership is sufficiently dynamic or visionary to act as a proxy for other forms of authority and influence.

The team was struck by the significance of the 'intellectual route' to authority and influence within the UN – that is, the value added to humanitarian operations by analytical leaders who offer clarity, structure and direction for both field operations and humanitarian advocacy initiatives. This was very much in evidence in the DRC, where key OCHA staff members offered insightful and visionary analysis that the UN and NGOs used to guide their response. Descriptions of the functions of coordination often fail to capture the significance of leaders who are able to offer a vision of what humanitarian action is trying to achieve and who have the ability to make people feel part of achieving it.

For all coordinators who have to persuade others to accept their leadership, some of the ingredients for success are the importance of experience in disaster management, an inclusive style, commitment, and humility.

As mentioned in the previous section, service orientation is also a critical characteristic for a coordinator. In the words of one NGO in the DRC, *'If they want to coordinate, it is important that they are aware of the partners' policies and needs. They also have to know how to assist.'* UN interviewees placed great emphasis on the importance of coordinators understanding and respecting mandates. Such understanding was cited as an ingredient for success in the initial phase in East Timor in 1999, and as key to the Coordinator's ability to make persuasive suggestions about how to address duplication or fill gaps.

Building a team is another important aspect of leadership. This requires openness and transparency on the part of the coordinator, and an ability to foster trust among all players. Yet effective leaders also find the balance between consultation and moving forward. A former Humanitarian Coordinator in Burundi was praised for her dynamism and capacity to organise people to get decisions made and implemented. Clearly, such individuals are a key asset to the humanitarian community.

⁴⁶ DHA in Rwanda in 1994, OCHA in Afghanistan, the Humanitarian Coordinator and UCAH in Angola, OCHA in eastern and western DRC in 2000, the former Humanitarian Coordinator in Burundi, the former Humanitarian Coordinator in East Timor, the current Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Somalia and the current Humanitarian Coordinator in FRY (excluding Kosovo) were all described as 'adding value' through their leadership.

Because there are individuals who appear to work magic on recalcitrant and resistant agencies, there seems to be little focus on buttressing the role of effective Coordinators by stronger requirements to coordinate among UN staff. Yet this with combining effective leaders could further increase the likelihood of effective coordination.

The right personalities

The focus on talented individuals is a theme that continually crops up in studies on coordination. Indeed personality was the most cited ingredient by interviewees for successful humanitarian coordination. For example, the problematic and unclear relationship between OCHA and UNDP in Afghanistan *'found a constructive way of functioning largely because of the personalities of key characters, albeit at the cost of much time and effort on their part'*.⁴⁷ Yet by contrast, the personality clash between a previous representative of the EC and a former Resident Coordinator in Somalia produced virtual deadlock across the coordination structure.⁴⁸

This highlights that while collaborative and adaptable personalities can overcome obstacles, this should not be depended upon. As Donini (1996) warns: *'As individuals move on, and different characters arrive, the structural cracks in the system may become critical.'*

The right capacities, competencies, tools and resources

Perhaps a more dependable feature of successful coordination than personality is ensuring that Coordinators have the right capacities and competencies. Interviewees in particular stressed the importance of this. This highlighted for the team the importance of IASC agreement on the key competencies for Humanitarian Coordinators. One interviewee suggested that the Pittsburgh testing procedure currently used to select Resident Coordinators was having adverse outcomes for the pool of possible Humanitarian Coordinators, as those who exhibit leadership skills fare less well against a Resident Coordinator-designed scale looking for consensus building.⁴⁹ This requires further study. The small number of female Coordination staff is also important to explore.

Yet few individuals coordinate effectively alone. It is clear from all the evidence that having sufficient time, money and skilled staff to perform coordination functions and provide key coordination services is a fundamental feature of coordination that adds value.⁵⁰ Little is specified in terms of how coordinators are supported. All the IASC and ECHA literature on the subject of models is notably silent on OCHA's role. Thus little is said about the required competencies of support staff, although analytical and information management skills were valued on the ground and mentioned by some interviewees. Studies and staff also argued that OCHA field offices required some staff with technical specialisms in order to act as effective interlocutors and facilitators of the work of operational agencies.⁵¹ Agreeing the required competencies and capacities for all coordination staff and recruiting staff accordingly is clearly an important element for effective coordination.

Significantly, what dogged all discussions was the impression of a dearth of suitable staff. The UN Development Group and OCHA are seeking to address this, but the team remained puzzled why candidates with the likely combination of skills for coordinators and support staff should prove so elusive to the UN. Yet it appears that this is true at all levels. As the Brahimi report points out, *'The current UN approach to recruiting, selecting, training and supporting its mission leaders leaves major room for improvement.'*

3.4.4 The Value of Systematisation

In theoretical literature, predictability emerges as an elusive but vital ingredient in effective coordination. If adhocism is one of the obstacles to coordination, so making things more systematic is its antidote. Doing things wherever possible according to agreed plans and established procedures helps to avoid reinvention of the wheel and minimise unintended consequences in order to produce more efficient and effective outcomes. Overall, strengthening management systems will have a positive impact on this. In addition, greater planning in advance, rosters of available staff and well-written Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) should also increase the likelihood of coordination.⁵²

⁴⁷ Donini et al (1996) op. cit. p. 24.

⁴⁸ However, this deadlock was circumvented in 1997 during the el niño flooding when UNICEF had the lead coordination role.

⁴⁹ For instance, Resident Coordinators have been found to emphasise process rather than product. See Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning (1996) 'Evaluation on Strengthening the Work of the Resident Coordinators', UNDP.

⁵⁰ For examples of Coordinators' effectiveness undermined by lack of resources see UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (1998) op. cit.

⁵¹ For example, see Borton, J. (1996) op. cit. p. 9.

⁵² For strong recommendations on the value of all three of these elements, see UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (1998) op. cit.

For example, planning in advance was described as the nub of success in the first weeks of the East Timor response. By virtue of being stuck in Darwin, the humanitarian agencies had already started to prepare a CAP and funding for preparedness. A US government report applauded the plan that *'included all anticipated activities, considered overall logistics needs, and...resulted in deploying the mission more quickly and with fewer problems than past operations of comparable size and complexity.'*⁵³

Yet the East Timor case was rare in that it concentrated all the agencies in one place in advance of the response who, as a result, knew something of the challenges they faced. Such knowledge is the exception rather than the rule, complicating the planning process. As Suhrke et al (2000) point out in considering UNHCR's surge capacity, for what size emergency should UNHCR prepare? Their answer is that UNHCR needs to become good at mobilising resources from elsewhere, rather than standing capacity, and prioritise shared resources such as warehousing, transport and communications that provide a bridge between the discrete assistance packages of other actors and facilitate the overall response.⁵⁴

For more than a decade, the creation of rosters of rapidly available staff has been repeatedly recommended to support coordination. Indeed, UNGA Resolution 46/182 made no distinction between complex emergencies and natural disasters in arguing for a roster of skilled, experienced and available officials. For three years the IASC has talked about establishing a roster of qualified candidates so that in the instance that a Resident Coordinator does not have Humanitarian Coordinator skills, s/he can be replaced. However, there remains no roster. The IASC recently established a training process aimed at emergency field coordination teams, only to delink this from the idea of a roster of readily available officials.⁵⁵ A decade after 46/182 recommended a roster, agencies seem unwilling or unable to make staff available at short notice to be part of inter-agency coordination teams. It hardly needs to be said that the UN should not wait another decade to implement this vital measure.

MoUs have proved valuable to build in greater — and much needed — predictability amid the flux of responses to fast-changing events. For example, the UNHCR/WFP MoU is one that has helped to clarify respective roles and responsibilities. In 1991, a seminal proposal on UN reform proposed that a *'comprehensive assignment of responsibilities within the UN system in humanitarian emergencies'* be set out and, in consultation with agency heads, *'propose any adjustments indicated by experience'*.⁵⁶ Clearly, when focusing on the UN, one of the enduring problems with agreeing such a matrix of responsibilities is that mandates overlap or have gaps in them. However, in the absence of more radical structural change to address this, making UN humanitarian coordination more systematic and predictable is essential to mitigate the current blight of adhocism that all too often impairs effective humanitarian response.

3.4.5 A Commitment to the Beneficiaries

There is one further key ingredient for effective humanitarian action and coordination upon which even the best laid plans and procedures depend: a focus on the people who are in need. No structures or incentives can fundamentally compensate for lack of commitment to an effective, coordinated response to the needs of beneficiaries. Indeed, often such focus and commitment has to compensate for the absence of effective plans and procedures, and to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of coordinated responses. Yet all too often, the pressures to play to agency goals and agendas can obscure the fundamental goal of any humanitarian response. In the words of one UN agency member in the DRC, *'The focus here is not on the "product". No one has thought what am I here to manufacture?'* It is a familiar adage: the greater the commitment and the closer that agencies get to people in need of assistance and protection, the greater the likelihood of coordination.

⁵³ US General Accounting Office (2000) 'Report to Congressional Requesters – United Nations: Reform Initiatives Have Strengthened Operations, but Overall Objectives Have Not yet Been Achieved', May.

⁵⁴ Suhrke, A., Barutciski, M., Sandison, P. & Garlock, R. (2000) 'The Kosovo Refugee Crisis – An Independent Evaluation of UNHCR's Emergency Preparedness and Response' p. xii.

⁵⁵ The Brahimi report recommends establishing a roster of SRSGs and other key players in peace missions, and the first steps towards this have been included in the Secretary-General's implementation plan.

⁵⁶ Urquhart & Childers (1991) op. cit., p. 62.

3.5 Conclusion

Given the scale and nature of the obstacles outlined above, effective humanitarian coordination is against the odds. Furthermore, some of the obstacles are beyond the immediate control of UN agencies, given their structure and the behaviour of Member States.

However, there are a number of factors that are within the remit of UN humanitarian agencies to influence, and the discussion of when coordination happens suggest that such factors have a significant impact on the effectiveness and quality of coordination. To summarise, the likelihood of coordination is maximised when:

- Coordinators have sufficient competence, management skills, dynamism and vision to give them authority to persuade or encourage others to coordinate.
- Coordinators have elements of command at their fingertips, such as control over funding and access, in order to increase the incentives or requirements of others to coordinate.
- Coordination is carried out by those who do not have vested institutional interests but rather provide services for the whole system, and for whom coordination is a full-time job.
- The Coordinator is supported by skilled staff to perform essential functions and services.
- There is effective accountability for coordination through clear structures and reporting lines, including clarity on who deputises for the Coordinator and what his/her responsibilities will be. This requires monitoring and assessment to ensure that good performance is rewarded and poor performance is sanctioned.

These are some of the essential ingredients of effective coordination. The challenge to the UN is to ensure that these are consistent characteristics of all coordination structures.

4: THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COORDINATION MODELS

4.1 Do the UN Models Matter?

For UN agencies, the question of who coordinates is a major preoccupation in any discussion on humanitarian coordination. Yet this discussion – confined as it is to a highly partisan debate which revolves around conflicting assertions of the merits of three different ‘models’ of UN arrangements – obscures more than it reveals.

Firstly, the debate obviates any discussion about the roles or relationship with warring parties, local communities of host governments – whether weak, malign or absent. Yet such roles and relationships pose central coordination challenges for the UN and humanitarians in the first place. There may not be a legitimate governing authority that has the concern or capability to care for populations, or that can be effectively held accountable for this, leaving humanitarian agencies subject to no authority in-country. On the other hand, these actors may be the pivotal players in coordination.

Secondly, the team was struck by the fact that, in tribute to the adhocism of the system, even cursory inspection of the UN’s ‘models’ reveals that there is much that changes from one setting to another. This begs the question whether the models as described are the key determinant of coordination outcomes.

Other critical variables that may determine the outcome of the coordination arrangements include the range of actors involved (UN, NGOs, donors), the physical location and space between those being coordinated, reporting lines, frequency of coordination activities, and the nature of the activities themselves.⁵⁷ The different role(s) played by the coordination support services and functions, such as those provided by OCHA, may be a key determinant of the impact of coordination. In the case of the combined Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, the presence of a UNDP senior deputy to take on management responsibility for the UNDP programme may also be a critical factor. Given that coordination in complex emergencies is a full-time function and coordinators are required to travel in-country and further afield, whoever is required to deputise for the coordinator may have an impact.⁵⁸ Finally, donor willingness to fund the costs of adequately resourced coordination is another factor that is of fundamental importance in determining coordination outcomes.

The brief discussion below presents the study’s findings on the advantages and disadvantages of the three models of humanitarian coordination as specified by the IASC. It draws on the debate around the links between coordination and operationality discussed briefly in Section 3, as well as the ingredients of successful coordination outlined above to make conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of each arrangement.

4.2 The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator: the ‘Combined Model’

Today in 14 countries where there are complex emergencies the UN Country Team is led by the Resident Coordinator – usually the Resident Representative (RR) of UNDP – who is also the Humanitarian Coordinator.

The attractiveness of this model, particularly to parts of the UN Secretariat, appears to stem from its ability to provide a sense of uniformity to coordination arrangements globally. According to interviewees, at the field level the model has made sense in settings such as Somalia and Afghanistan, both of which are dogged by chronic political conflict and characterised by the lack of clear distinction between humanitarian, rehabilitation and developmental action.⁵⁹ A perceived strength of the combined model is its ability to alleviate ‘the gap’ between relief and development. UNDP’s willingness to bear the costs of coordination is viewed as another major point in its favour.

⁵⁷ John Telford, pers. com. On the role of host governments, see Duffield, Jones & Lautze (1998), and Sommers, M. (2000) *The Dynamics of Coordination* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 40.

⁵⁸ Rotating the deputy role within the UN Country Team has been one way of team-building. By contrast, in Kosovo, a long-running dispute over whether the Humanitarian Coordinator should name the head of the OCHA field office as his deputy was a source of frustration to all staff involved.

⁵⁹ However, for a counter view on how the developmental focus of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator shaped the humanitarian response, see Bradbury, M. & Coulton, V. (2000) *Somalia Inter-Agency Flood Response Operation Phase 1, November-December. An Evaluation* (UNICEF Somalia: Nairobi).

Yet the IASC's work on post-conflict reintegration shows that this coordination model alone will not guarantee closure of 'the gap' between relief, rehabilitation and development action. This suggests that other factors – such as the analysis, vision, strategy and teamwork of coordination structures – are more important.

A widely felt disadvantage of this model centres on the difficulties for a UNDP Resident Coordinator who is mandated to work closely with the government of the country in carrying out the robust diplomacy integral to the role of Humanitarian Coordinator – for example, on the rights of refugees or IDPs.⁶⁰ On the other hand, some people noted this tension is true for all UN agencies that have obligations towards governments. Another disadvantage is the preoccupation some incumbents have with UNDP and developmental matters to the exclusion of humanitarian priorities.

The fiercest criticism of this model, however, was that Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators who have the competence and experience to effectively coordinate humanitarian action are in the minority. Many interviewees expressed frustration that though the IASC and the UNDP Administrator have both declared their willingness to replace Resident Coordinators who lack the experience or skills to also be Humanitarian Coordinators, this seldom happens. On the rare occasion when there is inter-agency agreement to replace a Resident Coordinator the evidence suggests that action is thwarted by the dearth of available candidates.

There are efforts being made to enlarge the pool of potential Resident Coordinators and to assess them against a range of competencies that are judged necessary for humanitarian coordination. This can only be welcomed. However, the study team noted concerns about the process by which these competencies had been agreed and concluded that there needs to be greater transparency and debate on the required competencies among IASC members. The key question is whether this process will bring about results quickly enough for the beneficiaries of tomorrow's complex emergencies.

4.3 The Humanitarian Coordinator Separate From the Resident Coordinator

The separation of the tasks of Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator into two posts occurs relatively infrequently. The separation of roles occurs when the Resident Coordinator lacks the experience or capacity to undertake the role of Humanitarian Coordinator, when there is no Resident Coordinator, when the emergency requires a regional approach, or when the scale of the emergency warrants it. It is often seen as a temporary option. Examples include regional coordinators in the Horn of Africa in 1999, in the Great Lakes in 1998, in the DRC in 1996, and the current humanitarian coordinators in Kosovo, East Timor and Moscow.

According to the research for this study, the great advantage of this model is the value of having someone specifically experienced, competent and focused on humanitarian coordination, including someone with skills in leadership, management and advocacy that have been specifically honed in response to the particular challenges of humanitarian emergencies.

Lautze, Jones and Duffield (1998) conclude that humanitarian coordination structures should emulate the governance structures of the country/crisis and thus that a separate Humanitarian Coordinator should be appointed where territory is divided between warring parties. Sudan, Somalia, and the DRC are all examples of this. However, all three cases highlight the risk that perspectives among coordination staff polarise on either side of borders or frontlines if there is insufficient flow of information and people across the boundaries. The debate over the value of a separate Humanitarian Coordinator has resumed once more in the DRC as the country continues to be divided among several warring parties with whom humanitarian actors must negotiate and interact. NGOs in particular are advocates for a separate Humanitarian Coordinator both for the reason of the country's divided governance and the scale of the task.⁶¹

⁶⁰ See Sommers (2000) op.cit; also Van Brabant, K. (1997) *The Coordination of Humanitarian Action: the case of Sri Lanka* (ODI: London) Relief and Rehabilitation Network Paper 23.

⁶¹ See SCHR (2001) 'The Democratic Republic of Congo: A Forgotten Emergency' Briefing Note, February.

The sole disadvantage associated with this model is the confusion that arises when the precise roles of the Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Coordinators have not been clear. The fact that reality rarely conforms to the neat distinctions of the 'relief-to-development continuum', and the increasing emphasis that humanitarians should consider and regularly review the potential applicability of the 'developmental issues' of sustainability and capacity building from the outset of any response, suggests that dividing the humanitarian and developmental roles is a recipe for confusion. It presents the possibility of entrenching false distinctions between relief and development in intellectual and operational terms, thus creating another layer or interface for coordination.

This disadvantage is a significant one. However, the study team was struck by the strength of the widespread view among interviewees that humanitarian coordination separate from the role of the Resident Coordinator should be the norm, in contrast to the documents of the IASC that suggest the separate Humanitarian Coordinator should be the exception.

4.4 The Lead Agency Model

A recurring theme in past studies of lead agencies is the lack of clarity surrounding how lead agencies are designated and what their coordination responsibilities are.⁶² This is partly a reflection of the fast moving events that lead to what Cunliffe and Pugh (1996) describe as the '*resort to reliance*' to the most established agency on the ground.⁶³ For example, UNHCR was lead agency in the Former Yugoslavia for roughly a year before it specified its own role.⁶⁴ Currently in North Korea and Kosovo there is debate about whether the coordination structures in place are lead agencies or not. In the DRC, a coordinator from an operational agency was also unclear whether he was in a lead agency model. Lead agency examples include UNHCR's role in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo in 1999/2000 as part of the UNMIK Humanitarian Pillar I, UNICEF's role in south Sudan until 1999, and WFP's current role in North Korea, among others.

However, interviewees criticised '*the temptations of imperialism*' inherent in the lead agency model, referring to the lead agency tendency to define the humanitarian problem '*in its own image*' so that it conformed to the lead agency's mandate. It was argued that in several instances lead agencies had insufficient capacity or interest to coordinate effectively, but instead a vested interest in their own operations.⁶⁵

Yet the fact that one of the criteria for lead agency designation is that the assistance required is closely related to its mandate suggests that this is an understandable tendency. In response to rapid onset emergencies, such as the refugee outflows from Kosovo in 1999, a lead agency is likely to be pre-occupied with establishing its own response rather than undertaking system-wide coordination. Similarly, the fact that lead agencies are so designated because they are on the ground points to what is often the reality: that other agencies are not there. The lead agency fills the vacuum created by others' absence, forced by circumstance – often including pressure from donors – to take on activities outside its mandate.⁶⁶

One interviewee noted that the predominance of the programme weakens normal accountabilities and enables the agency to pursue a path separate to that of the ERC and the rest of the system. '*UNICEF became lead agency in Sudan as a result of UNICEF's then chief being sent "to negotiate something" in 1989. The sheer scale of the UNICEF programme led to leadership taking on a life of its own – in the same way that in Bosnia, UNHCR, with its 850 internationals contributed a separate power structure and felt able to flout normal accountabilities.*'

⁶² For example, Suhrke et al (2000) op. cit., and Cunliffe & Pugh (1996) The UNHCR As Lead Agency in the Former Yugoslavia, The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance.

⁶³ See Cunliffe & Pugh (1996) op.cit.

⁶⁴ Although UNHCR was requested by Perez de Cuellar on 25 October 1991 to provide assistance to displaced people in the disintegrating Yugoslav federation, his routine letter did not specify lead agency status. By May 1992 in his report, the Secretary-General talked of a 'lead agency' but without detail of what this entailed.

⁶⁵ For example, see Telford (2000) op.cit.

⁶⁶ See Minear et al (1994) op. cit.

The most damning criticism, however, in interviews, case studies and past studies concerns the tendency of the lead agency to interpret coordination as control, or 'to ensure it is done' as 'do it yourself'. Even once other agencies had arrived, this tendency to interpret coordination as 'doing' led to ineffective delegation and a consequent failure to tap into the expertise of others.⁶⁷ By interpreting the role in this way, lead agencies were accused of causing a spiralling circle of negative consequences, skewing the definition of the problem, succumbing to mandate creep, showing little interest in others' operations, and seeking to direct others.

One lead agency case that escaped any criticism was WFP's lead agency experience in North Korea. Interviewees argued that the predominance of WFP's work in the overall humanitarian effort increased WFP's 'stakes' in the overall response. The Humanitarian Coordinator coming from WFP was widely praised for his effectiveness, which was attributed to his clear-thinking, inclusive style and humility.

4.5 Conclusion: So Who Should Coordinate?

The preoccupation with criteria for choosing models presupposes that there are mechanisms that can use them and that lack of clarity is the issue. Yet the impression is that criteria get lost amid the demands of inter-agency politics, particularly those of the major UN operational agencies, and that selection of coordination arrangements is only weakly connected to lessons from past performance or the demands on the context (see discussion of the IASC in Section 5).

Even if clarity were the issue, this study cannot offer definitive evidence comparing the impact of different models and arrangements on the humanitarian response and the lives of beneficiaries. As noted above, the variables are far more multiple than the UN discussions admit. However, on the basis of the discussion above, the study team came to a number of conclusions:

1. Section 3 set out some of the **essential ingredients in successful coordination**. These **provide clear criteria for any coordination structure to fulfil**: that humanitarian coordination is recognised as a full-time task requiring particular skills and competencies, and that it must be resourced, performed and respected as such. The coordination role requires skilled support teams, clear lines of accountability for coordination, carried out by players with no vested institutional interest who performs a service for the whole humanitarian community.
2. The model debate focuses largely on the 'top' of the coordination structure – that is, how it gets led – and pays little attention to specifying what and how coordination services and functions are provided.⁶⁸ This has led to unhelpful tensions around OCHA's role, reporting lines, the extent of its presence at sub-office level and the question of who deputises for Humanitarian Coordinators. (It also heightened the team's impression that the Secretariat and the major UN operational agencies risk prioritising the desire for simplicity over a concern with the detail of coordination on the ground.) **The IASC should focus more on coordination teams and structures, not solely on responsibilities at the top.** Clear specifications with regard to these structures, their functions, the required personnel competencies and the reporting relationships should form part of all decisions on coordination options considered by the UN and the rest of the IASC.
3. If the Secretary-General and the IASC's decisions continue to favour appointing a combined **Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator**, the disadvantages of this will be have to be mitigated by having a pool of high-calibre candidates who possess competencies that are agreed to be applicable for both roles, a rigorous system of performance monitoring by the ERC to ensure that those in place are playing their role effectively, and a decisive and professional approach to remove or replace Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators when they are found wanting. UNDP's current efforts to ensure that the UNDP programme is run by a competent deputy to allow the Resident Coordinator to focus on coordination are also essential to the success of this option.

⁶⁷ See Cunliffe & Pugh (1996) op. cit.; also Minear et al (1994) op. cit.

⁶⁸ This was not true of the inter-agency mission sent to the DRC in November 2000 that did make recommendations that OCHA be strengthened to provide more systematised support to the provincial coordinators at the sub-office level.

4. **Secondments** have provided a valuable pool of candidates for Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator positions in the past and have had the added benefit of tapping into the skills, resources and credibility of the seconding agency.⁶⁹ Secondments can also contribute to greater system-wide affiliation rather than narrow agency loyalty. In addition, they spread the costs of coordination. The challenge remains to persuade agencies to second their people in the first place. One suggestion to overcome this was that coordinators should be paid from a common trust fund managed by the ERC. This has the added advantage of buttressing the requirement that the seconded Humanitarian Coordinator derives authority from, and reports and is accountable to, the ERC, rather than the seconding agency.
5. The logic of the **lead agency model** is undeniable when one agency is overwhelmingly present. It makes pragmatic sense to harness its infrastructure for the benefit of the system. In the abstract, the lead agency could be considered the closest to a management model, combining elements of control, capacity, authority, and clarity about who is in charge. Yet in practice, evidence suggests that it has mostly **not been possible for an operational agency to coordinate in the interests of overall humanitarian response**. In the reality of a decentralised system, lead agencies have insufficient control to compel others to coordinate, and in practice have undertaken insufficient consensus-building efforts to persuade others to coordinate.
6. If one seeks **to mitigate the disadvantages of the lead agency model, the model ceases to be a lead agency model at all**. This is because, in essence, the lead agency model revolves around the lead agency country director or representative exercising the functions of Humanitarian Coordinator. To ensure that there are no vested institutional interests, at the very least the Coordinator should be relieved of responsibilities for day-to-day operations if a lead agency is to be successful in terms of performing system-wide coordination. Thus a 'lead agency model' that would be likely to avoid past pitfalls is essentially no different from the model where the Humanitarian Coordinator comes from an operational agency. Furthermore, if there were effective personnel rosters and rapid response support teams that could provide coordinators and support structures in the earliest days of an emergency, the use of the problematic option of carving coordination capacity out of the lead agency infrastructure would no longer be necessary.
7. Notwithstanding the one disadvantage of the separate function model, the team concluded that there is a **strong case in favour of the Humanitarian Coordinator being separate from the Resident Coordinator**. This is not least due to concern at the slow pace at which the pool of competent Resident Coordinator candidates is being enlarged. It also stems from a recognition of the scale of the challenges faced by humanitarian coordination such as the importance of leadership in overcoming the obstacles to coordination within the UN, and the importance of advocacy and negotiating access in settings where governance is weak or absent – all of which suggest that a separate Humanitarian Coordinator charged with full-time coordination would be best placed to coordinate. Where a Resident Coordinator is in place, clear strategies and strong collaboration should mitigate the intellectual and operational confusions.
8. The team therefore concluded that in order to fulfil the criteria established above, **the IASC should review its assumption that the combined Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should be the default option and instead favour separate Humanitarian Coordinators**, particularly in cases of large-scale rapid onset emergencies where territorial control is divided among belligerents and where the demands of negotiating access and undertaking advocacy are high. This should also be the case in peace operations where the Resident Coordinator is the DSRSG (elaborated below). Secondments from operational agencies to OCHA that report to the ERC should be actively sought.

⁶⁹ In Angola, Ramiro Manuel da Silva was able to call on the logistics capabilities of his organisation that contributed to him being an effective coordinator. In Burundi, one aspect of Kathleen Kravero Kristoffersson's credibility was her UNICEF background.

5: HOW COORDINATION GETS DONE

A recurring theme of this study is that effective coordination adds value by performing a number of key tasks, as well as offering a range of services and skills for the benefit of the response of host governments, UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross system and donors. This section presents this study's findings on the tasks, services and tools of coordination that have added value to the work of those involved in humanitarian response. It distils some of the ingredients that make such services most helpful, and discusses the associated challenges of providing them. It also considers some of the less successful aspects of humanitarian coordination that require reform.

The section begins by focusing on those tasks that this study argues are critical to coordination as an integrating activity, facilitating humanitarian responses that are more than the sum of their individual parts. These include analysis, strategy setting, the goals and standards for the response, orchestrating a division of labour, advocacy – including negotiating access and sustaining a framework of consent – and monitoring and evaluating impact.⁷⁰ The section then turns to some of the tasks and services that facilitate collaboration among agencies and thereby contribute to coordinated outcomes: the provision of common services such as security, communications, and common logistics, information systems, and resource mobilisation. The section concludes by looking at the tools and structures available to coordinators and their teams.

5.1 Coordinating Integrated Responses: Tasks and Techniques

5.1.1 Analysis

In the action-oriented culture of humanitarian response, understanding the causes and dynamics of the conflicts in which humanitarian agencies work can seem an optional extra. The IASC list of functions for strategic coordination does not mention analysis.⁷¹ Donors too show little interest in the quality of agencies' analysis of their environment.⁷² Yet analysis is not an optional extra. In the words of one interviewee: *'Offering a compelling vision of what can be achieved based on sound analysis of context is perhaps the greatest value added ever offered to coordination, provided that it is offered in a way that people can add to, [and] feel included in.'*

Such 'sound analysis of context' is increasingly acknowledged as vital to humanitarian response. Over the last decade, humanitarians have recognised that in contexts where civilian targeting may be a key strategic aim rather than a consequence of conflict, and where relief goods and infrastructure have been appropriated by belligerents, humanitarian aid can do more harm than good. Ensuring that this is not the case requires carefully considered strategies based on sound political, economic, and social analysis. Protection strategies also depend on sound analysis. The fact that humanitarians have to preserve the independence of humanitarian action and thus position themselves carefully in relation to political and military strategies – whether of UN peacekeepers, Member States, or warring parties – again emphasises the imperative of sound analysis of the context and conduct of humanitarian action (see Section 6 for more on this).

In addition to more macro analysis, effective micro-assessment of need requires understanding of the coping strategies that people themselves use to survive, and how such strategies are undermined or supported by the tactics of warring parties or humanitarian agencies. A positive example of this was found in Kosovo, where OCHA's Humanitarian Vulnerability Assessment initiatives, which draw on the expertise of the appropriate UN and other agencies, have been seen as very useful in guiding the overall response.

⁷⁰ Such tasks correlate closely with the IASC's description of strategic coordination. See IASC (1998a) op. cit.

⁷¹ A point noted by Duffield, Jones & Lautze (1998) op. cit.

⁷² For example, donor funding 'technologies', such as logframes and project cycles, do not require agencies to offer a very sophisticated analysis of the causes of humanitarian need to which they propose to respond.

Good contextual knowledge, situational analysis and regular monitoring of the environment are critical elements of effective security management.⁷³ Analysis is also a vital part of lesson learning. Across the humanitarian community analysing and capturing lessons from past experiences appears to be weak, contributing to the fact that all too many individuals and organisations are left to repeat the mistakes of the past and without the benefit of prior knowledge. In the DRC, several NGOs expressed the need for agencies to do more to share their analysis with one another, particularly sharing lessons from past experiences. For example, in Kosovo, although many agencies deemed the 1999/2000 winterisation programme a success, there was little that had been distilled into an analysis about why things had gone well to inform the 2000/2001 winterisation programme.

Humanitarian Coordinators and their teams have a pivotal role to play in providing and facilitating political, economic and social analysis at the macro and micro levels – a task that this study suggests is rarely done well.⁷⁴ As noted above, both Coordinators and members of their staff require strong analytical skills. Yet effective analysis also depends on techniques and systems to gather, share and manage information in order to build up a picture of the context and impact of humanitarian response. In Nairobi, for example, the Humanitarian Analysis Group of the SACB chaired by the UN Coordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU) provides a forum for monthly inter-agency discussion of the evolving situation among key information collectors.⁷⁵ Effective coordination requires this mix of skilled personnel and more systematic use of analysis-building techniques.

Value-added analysis:

- Is 'ahead of the curve' and considers issues that other agencies are not looking at. A good example is OCHA's work on energy in the FRY.
- Draws on analysis and knowledge of local staff and security officers. All case studies suggested this was a rich but neglected source of information and analysis.
- Requires access to the field. Many interviewees emphasised that this was essential in order to produce the level of information that adds value.
- Considers factors at global, regional, national and local levels in terms of how they impinge on the causes of conflict and context of humanitarian response.
- Considers political, economic, social and cultural factors.⁷⁶
- Knows what is going on, and therefore sheds light on why and how to respond.
- Offers understanding of the dynamics and motives of those that fight.⁷⁷
- Draws on locally available researchers, for example, the research of the War Torn Societies project in Somalia involving Somali researchers was found useful.
- Includes analysis on the processes by which some people win and others lose. For example, a number of interviewees found the UNCU's political economy analysis enriched their understanding and their strategies.
- Identifies the obstacles to building peace.
- Is built and modified from a process of listening to others.

Challenges

Effective analysis of a changing context is time-consuming and can represent an investment of resources in terms of personnel that seems beyond the means of individual agencies. This highlights the value added where coordination teams can offer such analysis to others.

Conversely, there is a risk that if analysis is seen as the sole preserve of one individual or agency, others can both fail to take responsibility for contributing information and analysis that they acquire in their daily work, and to use such analysis to guide their action.

Not all players will have the same analysis. This poses a huge facilitation challenge for coordination teams. As discussed below, CAP formulation could offer one opportunity for building system-wide analysis. Joint assessments have also proved a useful tool to forge shared perceptions of problems.

⁷³ For extensive detail on this, see Van Brabant, K. (2000) *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* (HPN at ODI : London) Good Practice Review 8.

⁷⁴ This is also borne out by ALNAP's review of evaluations of humanitarian response, see ALNAP (2001) *Humanitarian Action: Learning from Evaluation* (ODI: London).

⁷⁵ The UNCU is a joint UNDP/OCHA coordination office for Somalia (see Annexe 3).

⁷⁶ For comment on ignoring political analysis and focusing on socioeconomic issues which leads to inadequate attention to protection issues, see DANIDA (1999) *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance Volume 6: Great Lakes* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida: Copenhagen).

⁷⁷ For more information see Le Billon (2000) *The Political Economy of War: What Relief Workers Need to Know* (HPN at ODI: London), Network Paper 33.

5.1.2 Formulating a Strategy and Plan

Having a clear strategy and plan to guide the humanitarian response is pivotal to ensuring that the most critical humanitarian needs are met. Yet all too often humanitarian actors in general, and the UN in particular, are unable to articulate what they are trying to achieve, or how their particular actions relate to precise goals. This recurrent conclusion was common to past studies, interviews, and case studies. It derives partly from the paucity of humanitarian agencies' analysis of their environment, partly from a lack of a shared vision, and partly from poor management. It signals both a major failing of coordination and raises questions about the overall quality and impact of the humanitarian response. One interviewee summed it up succinctly: *'For a sustained and principled response, coordination should facilitate a joint vision and strategy, [and] not just share information.'*

For example, in the DRC many interviewees, including UN officials at the highest level, lamented the lack of an overarching strategy and implementation plan for humanitarian action. One coordinator described the fact that UN had not defined what it wanted to achieve as *'the first and major weakness'*. Another reason to plan was the negative impact on the overall response if planning didn't take place: *'If you want performance, tasks need to be clearly defined.'* The need to focus on a plan and not rely on the inspiration of single individuals was also acknowledged: *'You shouldn't bring people together around a person but around a plan.'*

Collected evidence from past studies and interviews suggests that formulating effective strategies for action and plans to achieve them requires leadership and vision, and can in return add to the credibility of those facilitating or leading the process.

Effective strategies:

- Are based on sound analysis of the political, economic, cultural, and social setting.
- Focus on tackling problems in an integrated way rather than in mandate sized pieces. The strategic framework in Afghanistan is perhaps one of the most ambitious attempts at this, with its aim to provide a common framework for planning and monitoring.
- Offer people a sense of direction.
- Turn activities into more than the sum of their individual parts.
- Should focus on specific, measurable targets not goals.⁷⁸
- Have benchmarks against which progress can be monitored.
- Focus on providing both humanitarian protection and assistance.
- Consider how to achieve and sustain access.
- Include the principles and standards that will inform that approach.
- Will define how to work with state structures and assess the impact of the humanitarian effort on state structures.
- Include all players from the outset, even if implementation will include a sequential approach.⁷⁹
- Emerge from processes that allow participants opportunities for joint analysis and reflection.
- Address the plight of IDPs.
- Address relief, rehabilitation and longer term development issues in an appropriate way.
- Include preparedness and prevention measures.⁸⁰
- Take into account the security implications of what is proposed.
- Identify the role for effective political action in pursuit of humanitarian goals.
- Should ideally be approved and adopted by the humanitarian community as a whole.

⁷⁸ Having specific, timebound and measurable targets instead of goals is important to monitoring and accountability. This emulates the trend in the development sphere. See Leader, N. (2000a) Negotiating the 'Governance Gap': The UN and Capacity-Building in Afghanistan - a Report for the UN Capacity-Building Task Force.

⁷⁹ See the Praxis Group Ltd (2000) Background Paper Drafted As Preparation for the ECHA DDR Working Group Paper: 'Harnessing Institutional Capacities in Support of DDR of Former Combatants'.

⁸⁰ This could draw on the work of the UN Interdepartmental Framework for Coordination team – consisting originally of DPA, DPKO, OCHA and later UNDP and UNHCR, and now also UNICEF, WFP, WHO and FAO – to support preventive action and to develop improved mechanisms for early warning, contingency planning and preparedness. Several fact-finding missions have been taken on behalf of this team to increase the state of preparedness.

Challenges

It is crucial to articulate strategies that respond to actual needs rather than lists of agency activities. UN agencies in particular and humanitarians in general often see problems through the prism of their own mandates and therefore fail to link effectively with the actions of others. For instance, despite the elaborate efforts of sectoral committees in Somalia to articulate sectoral strategies, the response risks being shaped more by supply agency than by the demand of the situation.

The proliferation of tools across the system – such as UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) and the Common Country Assessment (CCA), strategic frameworks as well as consolidated appeals at country and regional appeals constitute an array of tools for UN Country Teams to adopt.⁸¹ Although examining the interrelationship of these tools was beyond the scope of this study, it is clearly a challenge for the UN to be clear about the effectiveness, comparative advantages and links between these tools.

Harmonising the planning cycles of different agencies is another challenge. For example, a number of interviewees argued that as the timing of the CAP did not coincide with their agency planning it was unhelpful (although other interviewees valued the planning process attached to the CAP).

The inclusion – or exclusion – of NGOs and humanitarian actors outside the UN continues to be a point of contention. Non-UN actors are not systematically involved in UN strategy and planning processes, which certainly weakens coordination and potentially weakens the desired impact of the response. The Brahimi report's proposals to form Integrated Mission Task Forces to plan for and support peace operations composed exclusively of UN agency staff could compound this.⁸²

Finally, it is a challenge to devise plans that can respond to, and anticipate, fast-moving events. The Somalia case study offered a good example of this where, having had a mid-term review of the CAP for 2000, the UN had to respond to the emergence of the Transitional National Government (TNG). The result of the UN's efforts was the 'First Steps' document, a strategy for UN aid in response to the TNG's emergence, which was later expanded into a year-long programme that became the kernel of the CAP for 2001.

5.1.3 Adhering to Standards

A key element of an integrated and principled response is that all actors agree on the nature and scale of the required response, that they work towards shared goals, and that they strive to achieve the same standard of response. As the ICRC's 'recipe' of how to work emphasises, along with a clear moral framework and the use of legal instruments, conducting humanitarian activity in a stable, predictable manner is central to fostering respect for humanitarian principles and practice.⁸³ Striving for shared standards of response is vital to ensure impartiality.

Both the Somalia and the DRC cases highlighted the practical significance of striving for consistent standards in humanitarian response in terms of minimising accusations of political favouritism that could have dire implications for the security of aid workers and access to beneficiaries. Yet in both Somalia and the DRC, and despite efforts at Nairobi level for Somalia, the team found little evidence at the field level of attempts to standardise the response among agencies beyond their expressed commitment to the Sphere standards. (However, in the DRC, NGOs in North Kivu had agreed salary scales for local staff, and OCHA proposed to organise a workshop with every provincial inspector to discuss the technical issues of a national health plan.)

In Kosovo, despite a well-funded relief response by a huge range of agencies, almost no attention or training was given on standards for humanitarian response – even by the HCIC that was well placed to encourage initiatives in this area.

⁸¹ The UNDAF is described as the planning framework for the development operations of the UN at the country level, while the CCA is described as a collaborative, country-based process for reviewing and analysing the national development situation as the basis of the UNDAF.

⁸² See SCHR (2000) 'Briefing on the Brahimi Report', (SCHR, Geneva).

⁸³ See Pasquier, A. (2001) Constructing Legitimacy. (Seminar 'Politics and Humanitarian Aid: Debates, Dilemmas and Dissension' on 1 February 2001).

A number of cases demonstrate the possibility of establishing and using standards. For instance, Liberia provides a fascinating attempt to establish a local compliance mechanism – the Programme Compliance and Violations Committee (PCVO), set up to monitor the agreed code of conduct among agencies. If found in breach of the code, the agency had to stand before the PCVO chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator, donors, two international NGOs and two local NGOs. If violated three times, the organisation was kicked out of the coordination mechanism.

Adhering to standards requires:

- Agreement on the standards.
- The ability to monitor adherence to the standards.
- Compliance mechanisms.

Challenges

Clearly, the primary challenge is the lack of system-wide agreement on what standards should be used. Given the absence or weakness of any government structure in terms of setting standards, humanitarians are left to set their own guidelines for action that may vary radically from one situation to another. Although the IASC has given support to the Sphere standards by calling on its members to promote their use, there is no evidence of universal agreement to standards for all aspects of humanitarian response.

Lack of agreement on standards also affects assessment. In Somalia, dealing with the plethora of standards used by different agencies has been a challenge for both the Food Security Assessment Unit and the Health Information System for Somalia.

The situation in the DRC offered a compelling example of the complexity of ensuring standards are set and adhered to. Indeed, one major humanitarian actor in the DRC argued that that coordination was impossible because humanitarian agencies were so dispersed. The fact that governance across the country was divided – precluding any involvement of the authorities – added an additional dimension to the challenge.

Any discussion of compliance mechanisms begs questions about who has sufficient power or legitimacy to assess compliance. The role of the Tanzanian government and UNHCR in limiting the number of implementation partners in the Ngora camps in Tanzania offers one example of a coordinating structure with such potential power. The Liberia example above offers another. The future efforts of the Humanitarian Accountability Project may offer others. At a minimum, the debate about standards raises the hurdle yet higher for humanitarians to present, at the very least, a consistently clear – if not united – view of their work.

5.1.4 Agreeing/Assigning Division of Labour and Allocating Resources

The IASC guidelines require Coordinators to allocate tasks and responsibilities ensuring that they are reflected in a strategic plan in accordance with agency mandates. Yet a repeated refrain of studies on coordination is a concern that responses shaped solely by mandates will inevitably result in gaps and duplication, and that UN agencies should demonstrate greater commitment towards adopting integrated approaches to complex problems. Coordinators thus have a critical role to orchestrate divisions of labour to produce more integrated approaches that meet all the most urgent needs, not solely those that conform to UN agencies' mandates.

The division of labour is done well where:

- Coordinators have sufficient legitimacy such that agencies will accept greater direction rather than suggestion. In East Timor, some interviewees argued that rather than making suggestions, the Coordinator adopted a fairly directive approach in getting people to agree on what to do. However, it was recognised that the Coordinator was concerned to help agencies fulfil their mandate.
- Agencies pool resources and allow the Coordinator to suggest matching of resources and needs. This was also cited as the case in East Timor.
- There is follow up to ensure implementation. Interviewees pointed to the importance of follow up on agreed task allocations. For example, in Somalia the limited capacity of the SACB secretariat to follow up impeded the effectiveness of the agreements, whereas in the health sector the full-time Health Coordinator was able to establish whether agencies had implemented plans – or why not.

Challenges

Besides the obstacle of UN agencies' expressed resistance to coordination that resembles direction or management, the other critical challenge for Coordinators is addressing the gaps and duplications that exist among UN mandates, and the skills of NGOs. As discussed above, without responsibilities being allocated formally – whether through MoUs or a fundamental restructuring of the system, the onus is on individual Coordinators to see that all needs are met. Putting funds in the hands of Coordinators, whether small funds to cover gaps, or more radically, establishing a common fund at country-level to receive all responses to the CAP from which the Coordinator allocates funds to respective agencies, are two options to address this challenge.

5.1.5 Advocacy

Advocacy is frequently described as a vital part of humanitarian action. Certainly, many interviewees were clear that advocacy needed to be done. Yet few gave the impression that they felt responsible for advocacy. Although the IASC tasks the Humanitarian Coordinator with advocating for respect for humanitarian principles, many interviewees implied that advocacy is OCHA's responsibility.

Such discussions frequently gave the impression of advocacy as an end in itself, rather than the means to an end; that is, a set of influencing tactics or instruments, as critical to operational response as a water tank or food parcel. In practice, Humanitarian Coordinators may adopt some advocacy methods – such as negotiating with warring parties or lobbying host governments – while public education campaigns on health, or briefing donors or the media are often part of the daily tasks of many humanitarian agencies. Advocacy is not – and should not be – confined to OCHA or to Humanitarian Coordinators.

The study found many examples of how advocacy had proved critical to effective humanitarian action, and how Coordinators and their teams had played critical roles in coordinating advocacy actions, facilitating others, or acting as a spokesperson with warring parties, governments, donors and the media.

Advocacy is useful to:

- Press for policy and practice change, for example, in North Kivu, NGOs adopted a common position on taxation demanded by the local authorities.
- To push belligerents, governments, the UNSC and its members and donors to uphold their responsibilities to respect humanitarian principles. Briefings of the UNSC by the ERC, NGOs and OCHA officials were all offered as important examples of advocacy.⁸⁴
- To sustain and enlarge the constituency concerned about humanitarian action.⁸⁵
- To highlight forgotten or neglected emergencies, for example, OCHA's advocacy on the plight of the Banyamulenge in the DRC.
- To negotiate access. The efforts of Regional Coordinators in the Great Lakes and the Senior Humanitarian Advisor in the DRC were offered as important examples.
- To press for funds, for example, the global launch of the CAPs, or OCHA's efforts to convene a donors' meeting on the DRC.

Effective advocacy requires:

- **Sound analysis of the problem:** The OCHA DRC paper for the Geneva donors' conference in November 2000 was praised.
- **Clear messages and proposals for action:** Recent efforts of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response on the DRC and the Brahimi report were described as good examples of position papers.
- **Seizing all available opportunities:** Interviewees and evidence on the Afghan Support Group and the SACB suggests that NGOs are also not making the most of the opportunities of those groupings for advocacy.
- **Readiness to press the difficult issues:** This was one of the praised achievements of a former Humanitarian Coordinator in Burundi who, through '*good, friendly, firm but fair relations with the government*' was able to tackle the 'tough issues' that neither NGOs nor donors were willing or able to address.

⁸⁴ For a compelling case of the advocacy changing state interest, see MacFarlane, N. (2000) *Politics and Humanitarian Action* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies, Providence: Rhode Island) Occasional Paper No. 41.

⁸⁵ For emphasis that it is donors not the public who are suffering fatigue, see Randel & German (2000).

Challenges

While welcoming the role that Coordinators can play in advocacy, interviewees warned that fielding media inquiries was helpful as a service to agencies in general, but not if it is a bid for profile on behalf of one agency.

The study team was struck by the muteness of UN agencies towards donors, that is, an apparent unwillingness by the UN to criticise donor government policies. Humanitarian agencies, particularly the UN, must better manage the tension between relying on donors for funds, complying with their executive boards, and undertaking an advocacy agenda towards donors and governments to push them to uphold rights to humanitarian assistance and protection. As one UN interviewee remarked: *'We shouldn't sell our souls just because someone will give us \$1m.'* Efforts to build and strengthen the constituency for humanitarian action, including among citizens and UN Member States, is critical to the future of humanitarian action, and UN agencies have a central role to play in this. The Secretary-General has been clear on this point: *'Our humanitarian action will only be seen as legitimate if it is universal.'*⁸⁶

5.1.6 Negotiating Access/Securing and Sustaining a Framework of Consent

Protecting humanitarian space – respecting the rights of civilians caught in conflict to assistance and protection – is the task and fundamental goal of all humanitarians. Nonetheless, the IASC tasks the Humanitarian Coordinator in particular with responsibility for negotiating for greater access for beneficiaries to relief and assistance.

However, many interviewees suggested that access negotiation was the prerogative of OCHA, although UN interviewees stated they also wanted to be included and that their responsibility for access should be recognised. In practice, where OCHA or the Coordinator has been absent, or unwilling or unable to negotiate access, others have been forced to fill the vacuum. Examples offered included cases in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and northern Uganda. The Joint Policy of Operations in Liberia in 1996 also serves as an important reminder that arrangements spring up where the UN is seen as ineffective.

In the DRC, OCHA has played a key role in access negotiations and securing agreement to principles (see below), although much of the access negotiation was/is done locally by NGOs. NGOs were particularly grateful to OCHA for using the 'UN umbrella' to renegotiate access after NGOs left operations in Bunia due to security incidents in 2000. Several interviewees stressed the value of OCHA's approach of establishing Humanitarian Liaison Committees. These committees, formed by members of the community, were the key interlocutors with whom the UN could engage to negotiate safe access to beneficiaries. As one interviewee termed it: *'The message [to the committees] is "you give us the heads up on what is happening. We do not want to be surprised and we shall deliver".'* Thus the committees become a local accountability structure, held responsible by local community members for whether humanitarian assistance was provided or not. This has mitigated some of the access and security problems encountered by NGOs.

Negotiation is done well where:

- It is performed by skilled and experienced people who have strong back-up to provide them with background analysis and to monitor developments.
- It is performed for both the benefit of the UN and NGOs, for example, OCHA in Angola, Regional Coordinators in the Great Lakes, OCHA in the DRC.
- There is clarity on principles and there are agreed minima or bottom lines among all those negotiating access to prevent belligerents playing agencies off against one another.
- Ground rules/principles/minima are well known and disseminated among all staff, for example, the Ground Rules in Sudan. Broad principles can be the basis of more detailed negotiations, for example, WFP in Somalia used the code of conduct developed by the SACB as the basis of negotiation of principles with local authorities in Baidoa.
- Agencies have unified positions in-country and internationally, for example in cases where ground rules have been broken by belligerents leading to a suspension of humanitarian interventions. In such situations it is essential that a consistent message is communicated.

⁸⁶ See Annan, K. (2000b) 'Opening Remarks at the International Peace Academy Symposium on Humanitarian Action,' New York. mimeo.

- Donors and governments support the stance of those negotiating access by providing additional leverage or undertaking complementary diplomatic and political action. The Technical Committee (TC) on humanitarian assistance for Sudan that brings donors together to talk about access, humanitarian principles, communications and security has produced several joint protocol agreements signed by the government and warring parties useful to hold the parties to account.

Challenges

Securing agreement among UN agencies on who has principal responsibility for negotiating access is critical. Disagreements on what should be the fundamental principles for such negotiations also constitute a major obstacle to effectively coordinated responses within the UN. How UN staff interpret their agencies' mandates can confound essential agreement on basic principles, which in turn can jeopardise successful access negotiations. For example, it was particularly difficult in both Afghanistan and Burundi to agree on a definition of 'live-saving interventions'.⁸⁷

NGOs' views on whether the UN should secure access on behalf of all humanitarian agencies varied: the majority argued that access negotiations was a key role for the UN to carry out on behalf of NGOs. Yet some were anxious to maintain their independence in conducting their own access negotiations. As the UN does not have the power to 'bring NGOs to heel', it remains a challenge for Coordinators and their teams to see that all negotiations and negotiators increase, rather than jeopardise, respect for humanitarian principles among warring parties and/or local authorities.

5.1.7 Monitoring Strategy

According to their ToR, Humanitarian Coordinators should monitor and evaluate the overall implementation of the humanitarian strategy and plan to ensure that changing circumstances and constraints are identified and addressed. However, despite the measures taken by the IASC,⁸⁸ the study team found little evidence of strategic monitoring among UN agencies other than the CAP mid-term review. This is evidently linked to weak strategy setting processes and an absence of clear goals and benchmarks against which to assess the impact of a response. It is a sign both of weak humanitarian coordination and a more general weakness of humanitarian action that there is so little investment in assessing impact.⁸⁹

Despite the lack of positive examples of monitoring the progress and impact of strategies from which to draw, interviews and studies provided ideas on how monitoring is critical to effective coordination and response.

Effective monitoring is essential to:

- Evaluate the positive and negative impact of humanitarian response.
- Ensure that the response addresses changing circumstances.
- Assist with context analysis and lesson learning.
- Useful to provide coordination teams with information that, if recorded and retrievable, allows the coordination function to act as an institutional memory for others. Being able to inform or remind people of what went before becomes particularly important when staff turnover is high. It also facilitates subsequent evaluations of the response, which are important for accountability.

Challenges

The fundamental challenge for monitoring to be truly effective is establishing the benchmarks or indicators against which to assess impact. Yet this is frequently the source of debate. In the Sudan, for example, agencies have had great difficulty agreeing upon such indicators.

Monitoring also requires dedicated resources both to carry out and record findings. In some settings, even the most minimal monitoring, that is simple follow up on decisions made in coordination meetings, is thwarted by the lack of capacity.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ For further elaboration on this point, see Toole, D. (2001) 'Negotiation of Humanitarian Access and Assistance: Observations from Recent Experience', Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, Working Paper.

⁸⁸ The 1997 Secretary-General's Reform Report notes that the IASC agreed that '*simple field-based monitoring systems be established...with [the] Resident Coordinator setting clear benchmarks and objectives*'. The IASC is also looking at the possibility of an inter-agency mechanism.

⁸⁹ On the consequences of weak monitoring, see Wiles et al (2000) Independent Evaluation of Expenditure of DEC Kosovo Appeal Funds Phases I and II, April 1999–January 2000 Volume I (ODI in association with Valid International: London).

⁹⁰ The UN is not alone in this. For comments on the Red Cross Movement in this regard, see Anema et al (2000) op. cit.

5.2 Facilitating Collaboration: Tasks and Services

5.2.1 Security

For interviewees, security, logistics, and communications systems all fall under the rubric of common services. All these were described as adding value to individual agency responses and boosting the profile of the coordination structures that offered them.

Security is a key preoccupation of the UN system, as the death toll among humanitarian workers rises. To strengthen currently inadequate UN security measures, UN agencies have been pushing for stronger centralised resources of skilled people to support agencies on the ground. Yet UN Member States remain resistant to funding additional security measures.⁹¹ This leaves the burden on UN agencies who both provide funds and second staff to UNSECOORD, all in a context of donor pressure on UN agencies for cost-containment.

The IASC has a working group dedicated to agreeing measures to improve inter-agency collaboration on security. Although many interviewees mentioned coordination of security measures, there was little detail on precisely what role the Humanitarian Coordinator should play. Yet many people asserted that poorly coordinated security measures impact negatively on the overall coordination effort, as this corrodes trust and therefore the collaboration that is central to coordination, as well as placing lives in jeopardy.

In Somalia, the SACB literature suggests that collective response to security threats has been one of the major achievements of the coordinating body.⁹² However, the focus on security in Nairobi contrasted starkly with reported weak or ad hoc coordination on security matters in Baidoa.⁹³ In Kosovo, one of the main security related coordination issues has been the inability of NATO KFOR to provide clear, timely and adequate information to the humanitarian agencies.

Drawing on interview, case studies, past studies and the IASC Security Task Force, a number of important ingredients emerge that are useful to increase collaboration among agencies.

Good security coordination includes:

- The Coordinator's team should have a dedicated security capability focused on collecting information and ensuring that a common security plan is established (and regularly reviewed). This can be used as a basis for providing security analysis and threat assessment. For example, agencies in the Northern Caucasus have benefited from an office dedicated to security managed by UNSECOORD, which has become a resource for the humanitarian community at large.
- A common security plan which includes common conditions/criteria for evacuation/relocation.
- A common security communications channel for operational and other partners in humanitarian action.
- The commitment by all humanitarians to provide information to security focal point(s) in order to facilitate mapping incidents, common training, and establishing minimum security standards. For example, the UNCU for Somalia aims to create an incidents' database with the UN Chief Security Advisor.
- Regular consultation with NGOs and the Red Cross Movement.
- Open and transparent discussion on arrangements for staff security.
- Clarification by the UN on what protection and evacuation arrangements can be provided to non-UN agencies.⁹⁴
- The development of a protocol for the use of armed guards, as done in for example, in the Northern Caucasus and Sierra Leone.
- Building relationships with the local communities in order that they use whatever influence they have over armed groups who might threaten the provision of humanitarian assistance.

⁹¹ In December ACABQ refused 90% of what was requested to strengthen measures to provide field security. It pressed instead for central management of existing resources.

⁹² See the SACB's security guidelines document of May 1999. This has principally involved banning activity in areas where there have been incidents. However, it is not clear how the decisions are made about when to lift bans, and recent experience suggests agency resolve to abide by such bans is fracturing.

⁹³ At the time of the study, a zonal security officer had just been placed in Baidoa focused explicitly on improving inter-agency coordination on security.

⁹⁴ Sommers (2000) highlights that successful management of security information took place only after circumventing UN regulations aimed at preventing UN agencies from sharing information and coordinating security with NGOs.

Challenges

One of the key challenges to coordinated security measures is resolving the disputes around who should be party to them. For example, in some instances OCHA has been excluded from field-level security management teams by other members of the UN Country Team. Such exclusive habits are not conducive to coordination, whether on security or other matters.

These exclusive habits are also a point of contention with NGOs. NGOs may have different thresholds for evacuation and the UN might pull out when others remain. Yet how this is done is crucial. For example, in Burundi in 1999, in addition to their withdrawal, UN agencies withdrew the radios that they had been providing to NGOs. Such action can fatally undermine any sense of community and collegiality. The IASC Security Task Force, due to finish its work in mid-2001, will hopefully address some of these UN–NGO tensions.

5.2.2 Logistics

All the evidence for this study suggests coordination structures that provide or facilitate access to logistics support are almost invariably valued. This was the foundation for the valued role of the Coordinator in East Timor in matching available logistics resources with needs, and supporting WFP's vital logistics role. In the DRC, OCHA's role in hiring planes to facilitate the response to crisis in Kisangani was also much appreciated. It was also at the heart of a highly collaborative relationship between WFP and UNHCR in the Great Lakes in 1996, when they temporarily pooled personnel and equipment in Movement Control Centres (MOVCONs).⁹⁵

Although the IASC has endorsed WFP's role in providing logistics, individual agencies retain the prerogative to make their own arrangements.⁹⁶ However, the current IASC initiative to create an inter-agency capacity for activating a United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) at the onset of a large-scale emergency is a sign of inter-agency enthusiasm for joint approaches on this matter. The UNJLC proposal – being coordinated by WFP – builds on the efforts to create a UNJLC during the Eastern Zaire crisis in 1996, the Somalia/Kenya flooding in 1998, the Kosovo operation, East Timor in 1999, and the flooding in Mozambique in 2000. The plan is to establish a UNJLC – matched to the demand of the situation – within the 'operational structure' of the Humanitarian Coordinator, to which agencies might second staff. WFP is working on the required 'flyaway' packages required to have UNJLC capability readily available.

Important elements of logistics coordination include:

- The willingness of agencies or Coordinators to put resources and capabilities at the service of others.
- An agreed sets of procedures for joint logistics operations.

Challenges

As with other coordination services, the key to usefulness of joint logistics arrangements is that they add value. In the words of one UN agency: *'Having central services is fine provided they are fast enough.'* Where common services are significantly slower than agencies' own arrangements, their attractiveness diminishes. This will also be the challenge for the proposed UNJLCs.

5.2.3 Additional Common Services

Besides assistance in security and logistics, there were a number of other useful services provided by coordination structures mentioned in interviews and studies. One interviewee captured this *quid pro quo* element of coordination, highlighting how valuable such services are where Coordinators have to forge consensus among agencies: *'If you can put up VHF communications, you'll be given a whole lot more information.'*

There was little mention of common houses and offices, although this has come up in past studies.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (1998) op. cit.

⁹⁶ IASC (1998b) 'Pamphlet on Humanitarian Coordinators Annex III', November.

⁹⁷ UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (1998) op. cit., p.14.

Evidence suggested that additional useful services include:

- Common communication facilities such as those provided between 1994 and 1996 by UNHCR in the Goma camps, and the Radio Room in Rwanda 1994. By contrast in 2000 in the DRC, many NGOs and the Red Cross were frustrated by the absence of a shared communication system.
- Facilitating visas and laissez-passer.
- Providing pigeonholes, meeting space, GIS/database and mapping services, NGO liaison, and a front desk service. The HCIC in Kosovo is a good example here.
- Helping new UN and NGOs acclimatise through induction services (although this is partly to compensate for the poor levels of preparation and induction of new staff before they arrive in the field).
- Providing training sessions, for example, in the DRC, OCHA organised training sessions on food security and flood response that NGOs found useful.

5.2.4 Resource Mobilisation

Although preoccupation with funding was never far below the surface in many interviews, there was very little said by interviewees about the role of field-level coordination in mobilising resources. However, if decentralisation of funding decisions emerges as an enduring trend among donors, this could change. Indeed, the team encountered a number of examples of field-level Coordinators involved in resource mobilisation. In Kosovo, the Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA worked to mobilise funding for 2000/2001 winter preparedness activities. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia was engaged in regular and sustained advocacy at local and international levels on Somalia's needs and the proposed responses to support the Somali people. In the DRC, many interviewees spoke of the importance of a recent donor conference for which OCHA had prepared a paper on behalf of the UN Country Team and the humanitarian community.

On the basis of the evidence before the team, resource mobilisation is done well where:

- The Coordinator does not have responsibility for a particular agency's operations; this helps avoid conflict of interest. In Angola, the involvement of UCAH in demobilisation led to some seeing UCAH as a competitor for resources rather than an impartial fundraiser.
- Efforts are prepared jointly. For example, in Burundi the humanitarian community came together to create a reconstruction plan that was discussed at a Brussels pledging conference on 6 December 2000.
- Where analysis of the causes and consequences of humanitarian suffering are clearly presented along with clear proposals for international action.
- Agencies on the ground engage donors at local and international level.
- Where efforts are directed at common funds and system-wide responses rather than agency interests.

5.2.5 Information (gathering, analysis, synthesis and dissemination)

There is universal consensus that information sharing is the *sine qua non* of coordination activity. The capacity to filter, analyse, synthesise and present information into digestible and easily used form is a valuable service. Timely and effective response to humanitarian emergencies depends on accurate information about needs. Information also underpins analysis, the value of which has already been discussed.

A common theme among interviewees was the high value placed on information services that are provided in an equal way for the benefit of the entire humanitarian community rather than solely for the UN or NGOs. This was one of the stated strengths of the HCIC in Kosovo and the Integrated Operations Centre of UNREO in Rwanda in 1994, and one of the striking weaknesses of information exchange in the DRC where some UN agencies were resistant to sharing information with NGOs. It is also crucial that consolidated information is distributed widely, particularly to those that provided it. The team received frequent complaints, particularly from international NGOs, that information provided '*disappeared into a black hole and was never seen again*'.

Key elements of useful information provision include:

- Maps, graphs and matrixes of who is doing what, where, as well as where local needs are. This was the most cited source of useful information for programme planning. This sort of information is therefore essential for a Coordinator to have in his/her toolkit. However, the degree of sophistication of this information may differ between what is useful for decision-making and what is useful for reporting. In Burundi and Angola, mapping the whereabouts of IDPs gave practitioners a bigger picture as well as the basis for an advocacy tool to be used with the donors; it also built the credibility and influence of the Coordinator.
- Data on population needs that is disaggregated by sex and age to identify the specific needs of women, men, children and the elderly.
- Up-to-date directories of contacts. For example, a directory of humanitarian and development contacts has been drawn up by OCHA Georgia.
- Translation of the local press was described as useful in Indonesia. This is also key in security planning.
- Archive materials, for example, background documents on particular geographic areas, are also helpful. Several interviewees suggested this was a neglected but important source of information.
- Information on food security strategies at household and regional level provided by the Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) for Somalia enabled WFP to better target its assistance. Established in 1994, the FSAU now has monitors across Somalia to provide information on the agricultural and food availability situation in the country.
- Geographic information systems (GIS) are powerful tools for tracking needs and the impact of action plans. The HCIC in Kosovo produced an atlas available publicly on their website, on CD-ROMs, and in hard copy.⁹⁸
- Data on donors' policies and funding.
- Pigeonholes and mailboxes allow easy dissemination of information for agencies in close geographical proximity to one another. This can be complemented by websites and CD ROMs where this is not the case. Interviewees said this facilitates communication with headquarters.
- Agency handbooks and key documents available on CD ROMS that are regularly updated.
- The Integrated Regional Information Network's (IRINs) ability to provide a short synthesis of regional activities, trends and events was universally welcomed.

Challenges

National and local authorities have a key role to play in gathering and providing information on the needs of the population and are an important source on which humanitarian agencies can draw. One of the challenges is to build the capacity of such national and local authorities where they exist.⁹⁹

Minimising the duplication in data gathering and maximising its accessibility to potential users is also crucial. This was one of the major challenges described in Somalia. For instance, UNICEF has some of the best data on the socioeconomic situation across the country but this is used for its own purposes. In the same vein, when the UN Development Office for Somalia disbanded in 1999 few knew that it had been collecting data for five to six years; the information was not well-archived and therefore difficult to retrieve.

One of the challenges that accompany new information technology tools is having staff available to operate them. This was a particular problem that beset the Health Information System (HIS) project for Somalia. After five years, the system is not up and running. Although data exists, it has not been input effectively. The project has also suffered from lack of funding and leadership. In the field, although agency staff are keen to use the HIS, the lack of training on the incipient system is a source of frustration.

In many settings, Coordinators have to solve the problem of how to gather and disseminate politically sensitive information and analysis. The solution of NGOs in the DRC was to hold small, informal gatherings which brought Congolese and international staff together to share information and analysis on the political and military situation. Participating agencies felt this was invaluable.

⁹⁸ HCIC combined GIS data produced by such sources as the Western European Satellite Centre, the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining, KFOR, the Yugoslav Institute of Statistics, and the International Management Group.

⁹⁹ This recurs as a recommendation of the Special Coordinator on Internal Displacement.

What emerges from all this is the challenge of finding staff who have specific skills in filtering, analysing, synthesising and presenting information. A good example of this is IRIN, which relies on teams that include professional journalists who are used to digesting a large volume of material alongside humanitarian workers who maintain the humanitarian perspective and angle of IRIN's work. A further challenge is ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of staff on a coordination team to meet information needs. When humanitarian actors have limited commitment or capability to share information, coordination structures have to be more proactive in information gathering.

Overall, for all the emphasis placed on information, the study team came away with a sense that there is rarely discussion of what kind of information people need to make good decisions, and little discussion between providers and consumers about what is wanted. As a result, those given responsibilities to compile information have to work this out for themselves, so reinventing the wheel. One interviewee summed this up: *'I am fed up with the little initiatives on information here and there. What do we want to collect and for what?'*¹⁰⁰ The challenge is to secure system-wide agreement on guidelines for basic data collection and dissemination.

5.1.9 Meetings

Meetings are the most obvious tool by which information is gathered and shared. Meetings are also useful for team building, problem solving and building networks.

In the DRC, many NGO interviewees lamented that UN-convened meetings did not provide real opportunity to analyse the situation or share lessons. However, NGOs in particular stressed that in Kinshasa, OCHA-convened meetings offered useful networking opportunities. For Somalia, although many value the SACB for bringing people together, many interviewees stressed the importance of transparency and honesty from participants, implying that this is currently lacking.

Factors that determine the usefulness of meetings include:

- **Inclusive composition:** UN Country Team meetings that include all IASC members was cited as a strong point of coordination in Belgrade for FRY, excluding Kosovo. In the DRC and Somalia, exclusion of local or international NGOs from key meetings was a sore point for some interviewees.
- **The comportment of participants:** Commitment, transparency, and respectfulness from all participants is required. The team was struck that few meetings included introductions.
- **Good preparation and minuting:** Objectives and outcomes should be defined.¹⁰¹
- **Sensitivity to translation requirements:** In several meetings attended by the team, there was little sensitivity towards those participants who were working in a second or third language, and their possible translation needs.
- **Effective follow up:** The degree of follow up outside meetings can depend on resources. For Somalia, the SACB Secretariat argued that its own limited capacity impaired follow up on decisions. Perhaps the most critical case was an agreement to strengthen coordination in the field that had simply slipped out of sight through lack of follow up.
- **Skilful and sensitive chairing that can balance consultation and action:** UN Country Team meetings in Belgrade demonstrated how effective chairs can 'keep the ball rolling.' Effective chairs can also use meetings as an accountability mechanism, using the public arena to remind others of prior commitments in meetings, mandates or MoUs. This role was played to good effect by the Health Coordinator in the SACB.
- **Making regular checks on the composition and frequency of the meeting:** This will need to be done in order to ensure that composition and frequency are still appropriate, as the context of the humanitarian response changes. Otherwise meetings will suffer from dwindling attendance and/or attendance by decreasingly less senior personnel.

Challenges

Participation is a vexing question. Those coordination structures that mirror IASC membership – including UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement – still exclude donors and local NGOs. East Timor, the DRC and Somalia are all examples where the exclusion of local NGOs – whether for reasons of security or translation – has proved contentious.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ This will be challenges for the Geographic Information Systems Team (GIST) and the Structured Humanitarian Assistance Reporting (SHAPE) initiative, both inter-agency information management initiatives.

¹⁰¹ The Handbooks of UNHCR and UNDAC handbook provide useful tips on effective meetings.

The question of donor participation is also a thorny one. For instance, in the Somalia case study, interviewees argued that donors are central to the SACB. However, while some interviewees argued that donors' involvement in meetings acts as a compliance mechanism and ensures that plans are implemented, others suggested that donor presence encouraged grandstanding, and that it risked politicisation of humanitarian decisions.

Political sensitivities and security concerns affect participation and also agendas. In the eastern DRC, for example, the participation of politically partisan local NGOs in information sharing meetings has inhibited open communication. In Kinshasa, to demonstrate their impartiality and neutrality, agencies have to be sure that no political information is shared at public meetings or in minutes or bulletins for fear of provoking the government's suspicions.

The challenge to ensure that there is an optimal level of structured interaction and that the right number of meetings takes place is a challenge that is emblematic of coordination in general. Regular, well-run meetings that stick to a set format and meet felt needs of the participants to share information and agree actions are valuable. Yet meetings that are convened for the sake of it are not. For instance, in the Somalia case, it seemed that the regime of meetings in Nairobi proceed with minimal apparent regard for the impact of such activity on the ground. However, in Baidoa, prior to the deployment of a UNCU field coordination officer in December 2000, the lack of systematic exchange between agencies on issues that affected them all appeared to risk duplication and gaps in response, as well as increasing security risks as a result of varying interactions with local communities.

5.3 Tools and Structures

5.3.1 The Consolidated Appeals Process

Since its inception in 1992, there have been continuous efforts to improve the CAP as a process and as a tool. There is evidence of increasing engagement by donors and others in using the CAP as a strategic coordination tool. However, on the basis of the evidence gathered by the study team it is clear there is still little uniformity in how this is done, what or whom it includes, and how it is used. Indeed, the impression from interviewees was that the CAP remains largely a public relations exercise that produces little integrated planning or prioritisation and gives donors the freedom to cherry pick or ignore it. This despite the fact that, globally, the CAP provides one of the only tools that enables comparison of international responses to humanitarian need and is therefore potentially very useful.

In the DRC, views were overwhelmingly negative. NGOs were not aware of having been asked to participate. Many people commented that there was no substantive consultative process behind the document; neither could anyone give a clear view of how the CAP related to planning commissions that had been established in North and South Kivu. In Somalia the key tensions surrounded getting buy-in from the donors and NGOs in the SACB for a UN process and tool. More positively, in Kosovo, as the CAP was a regional one for South East Europe, it provided one of the few fora for inter-agency discussion at the regional level.

However, it is not clear to participants that regional CAPs always add value, particularly given the opportunity costs in their formulation. For example, experience in preparing the CAP for the Great Lakes region was complicated by five agencies defining regions differently.

At its worst, preparing the CAP is more oriented to estimating likely donor response than reliable assessment of humanitarian need. One interviewee summed up the widely-held view among the rest: *'CAP is a major distraction from the real work. It is donor driven and you write down what you think donors want to hear. It doesn't reflect reality and doesn't necessarily secure financing.'* UN agencies appear to go through the motions to please the donors. NGO participation varies.

Donors too show a mixed response. Some argue that the CAP has little relevance to their funding decisions. However, others have used the CAP as a framework for planning, as a reference point for dialogue with other actors,¹⁰³ as a factor in their funding decisions, or as a decisive trigger for the allocation of resources.¹⁰²

¹⁰² At the time of the study, the NGO Consultative Committee for Somalia in Nairobi was strengthening local NGO involvement by restructuring its Steering Committee from an ad hoc grouping of international NGO representatives to include one local and one international NGO from each district in Somalia.

¹⁰³ See the Common Observations of the First Donor Retreat on the CAP, Montreux, Switzerland.

Although it is not clear to what extent the quality of the analysis and programmes in the CAP is a key determinant of its success as a fundraising tool, the study team concluded that the CAP could add value to the humanitarian effort by placing greater emphasis on the process of analysis and planning. As one interviewee pointed out: *'The good thing about the CAP is that it forces agencies to sit and conceptualise together through joint assessment and then mapping out the strategy.'*

The CAP could therefore provide an opportunity to do three things currently neglected in many coordination structures and settings: (i) engage in analysis of the environment, essential for security and strategy setting, (ii) gather information about how the aid effort is impacting on the situation positively or negatively, and (iii) be the basis of inter-agency advocacy on the plight of people in any given situation. For this to happen, the CAP process needs to become an effective forum for overworked field workers to analyse and plan in way that is clearly beneficial to them. OCHA could play an important role in providing inputs of analysis to stimulate thought and debate.

This study suggests measures to make the CAP more effective include:

- Make the exercise more evidently useful to field staff as an opportunity for them to analyse and plan. As one interviewee said *'It does make the UN talk to each other which is no bad thing, but it is negative [in] that it gets people to come from headquarters rather than the field.'*
- Ensure that the process is supported by effective facilitation and analysis so that participants feel the process adds value to their work.
- Require Coordinators to actively seek NGO and Red Cross Movement involvement in the analysis process, if not the fundraising strategy. The credibility of the plan and the degree to which NGOs want to be associated with the UN are two factors that will determine NGO interest in the CAP document as a fundraising strategy. UN political and military actors and analysts should also be involved in the analysis and strategy-setting process, if not the strategy.
- Turn the CAP into a valuable opportunity for planning operational response and advocacy strategies (beyond the increasingly elaborate efforts around the CAP launch).
- Improve the accuracy and transparency of the CAP's assessment of target beneficiaries in order to increase its use as an advocacy tool for assessing and comparing international responses to humanitarian need.¹⁰⁴
- Encourage the UN system to give greater authority and legitimacy to a neutral Coordinator to better enable him/her to facilitate and ultimately perform prioritisation.

5.3.2 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

Past studies and interviewees pointed to the value of MoUs to counter the tendency to leave UN Country Teams and individuals to reinvent the wheel and negotiate new relationships at field level. At a minimum, they indicate a predisposition towards collaboration.¹⁰⁵ They can also serve as a useful accountability tool.

Interviewees were divided on the level of detail that is helpful in an MoU. Some suggested that broad frameworks where specific interpretation of language can be interpreted in a particular context are most useful. For others, this left too much to interpretation. Judging from the documents from the IASC and ECHA regarding divisions of labour on IDPs and ECHA respectively, these processes fall into the latter camp: in a time-honoured formula, all the difficult decisions about divisions of labour have been devolved to task forces in the field.

If MoUs are to be useful, it is critical that Coordinators and their staff are aware of all the relevant MoUs, their contents, and their responsibility to honour them. This in turn depends on effective induction and briefing of new staff, as well as effective dissemination to existing staff. One interviewee suggested that OCHA field units keep and provide all MoUs as a service.

¹⁰⁴ For discussion of the challenges of assessing needs and recommendations and agreeing shared assessment methodologies among IASC members see Ockwell, R. (1999) 'Full Report of the Thematic Evaluation of Recurring Challenges in the Provision of Food Assistance in Complex Emergencies' (Office of Evaluation, World Food Programme).

¹⁰⁵ For example, IASC Post-Conflict Reintegration Report; also WFP, UNHCR Tripartite report, op. cit.

5.3.3 Sectoral Coordination

As this study's ToR suggest, sectoral coordination is a critical aspect of coordination. As one NGO termed it, *'Humanitarian coordination is based on the foundation of sectoral coordination'*. This foundation can be a strong one. By its nature, the focus of sectoral coordination is narrowly defined which offers greater clarity about what needs to be done. Coordination responsibilities are frequently allocated on the basis of technical skills or mandates. Participants often share technical skills, which focuses debates and decisions around technical matters. Greater proximity to the beneficiaries also focuses efforts.

That said, coordination at the sectoral level is not immune to some of the difficulties encountered in coordination in general. Sectoral coordination can impose burdens that outweigh its benefits, for instance, when the number of coordination bodies proliferates, and individuals and agencies with coordination and operational responsibilities find themselves struggling with double workloads. As one UN interviewee commented, *'Sectoral coordination can help focus things by focusing on specific details. But it can become doing nothing other than coordination.'*

Furthermore, allocating coordination responsibilities can prove contentious even at sectoral level, particularly when no agency – whether the UN or otherwise – has clear technical expertise or mandated responsibility for a sector. Allocating responsibility for shelter in the early days of the response in East Timor is a case in point. In both east and west DRC, the already ad hoc efforts of coordination in several sectors have been hampered by disputes between agencies about coordination and implementation responsibilities. A staff member of one of these agencies described themselves at being *'at war'* with another UN agency.

Both donors and agencies can resist Coordinators' efforts to allocate sectoral responsibilities. There should be more work at central level to build in more predictability around allocating sectoral responsibilities in order to relieve Coordinators from having to reinvent the wheel at every turn.

Sectoral coordination works well where:

- Strategies at the sectoral level are linked to fulfilling the overall strategy guiding the response. Sectoral coordination is weakened by the absence of clear goals for the overall humanitarian response and the sector.
- Full-time Coordinators are appointed at the sectoral level who are technically competent, for example, UNHCR's appointment of high-calibre technical Coordinators in the health, water, food, site planning, logistics, security, communications and community services sectors in all its sub-offices in the Great Lakes in 1994.¹⁰⁶
- Coordinators are prepared to 'shame and blame' others into upholding their undertakings, thereby acting as a monitoring and enforcement mechanism. This was true of the health sectoral committee of the SACB. The UNMIK Mine Action Coordination Centre in Pristina is also an example where tight coordination was exerted, with good collaboration from donors.
- It is supported by field units that collect and disseminate information, advise on strategies, and act as focal points where thoughts on the issue can circulate. For example, FAO's field units, now present in 17 countries.¹⁰⁷
- It does not preclude focus on cross-cutting issues such as human rights or protection – a criticism that interviewees levelled at coordination in the early days of the East Timor response in 1999. Several interviewees suggested that complementing sectoral coordination with provincial or regional focal points would support this.

5.3.4 Regional Coordination

In all three case studies, interviewees repeatedly stressed the importance of regional coordination. As one UN interviewee commented: *'It is critical for the UN to get better at this given that the problems we address do not stay within borders.'* Many interviewees spoke of the value of having a regional perspective on the causes and consequences of conflict and humanitarian suffering.

¹⁰⁶ Borton, J. (1996) op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ The seed money that has been provided by OCHA for some of these units e.g. in Timor and Mozambique, was welcomed.

In the DRC, the regional structures of some agencies have, on occasion, compensated for weak support from headquarters and have offered invaluable logistics or administrative support. Yet on other occasions, these same structures have duplicated efforts or requirements from headquarters. There was even stronger criticism of some regional offices for engaging in analysis of belligerents' strategies without full awareness of the potential dangers this posed for UN colleagues in the country itself.

The UNCU for Somalia has focused on strengthening regional connections, particularly with Kenya and Ethiopia, which has led to the adoption of a regional security plan and increased information sharing. A regional exercise to stimulate pastoral networks has also been hugely beneficial for all participants. Both these positive examples highlight the added value of regional analysis and strategy.

In relation to Kosovo, there appeared to be considerable cross-border coordination over the sensitive Presovo region in Southern Serbia, particularly between the Humanitarian Coordinators in Pristina and Belgrade. The fact that both Humanitarian Coordinators had regional envoy roles within their respective organisations also fostered regional perspectives. However, it was not clear whether there were adequate coordination structures in place in order to build and maintain a comprehensive regional analysis.

Inevitably, the recurring theme in discussion of regional coordination is how do Coordinators and structures at regional level relate to Coordinators and coordination structures in the countries within that region.¹⁰⁸ It is not clear that additional Coordinators present the optimum model for to achieving regional coordination. For example, the designation of a Regional Coordinator for the Horn of Africa was criticised by a number of people, notwithstanding the calibre of the candidate in the job. The position was described as an ad hoc structure that was devised with little concern for how it would relate to other Coordinators in the region; it was perceived to be responsible for retarding incipient attempts at regional coordination initiated by Coordinators across the region.

Many argued that regional coordination can be best achieved by country coordination structures coming together on a regular basis and establishing a flow of information and analysis between them. This is supported by OCHA's experience in the Great Lakes, where its efforts to bring Humanitarian Affairs Officers together every three months received high praise. This practice is supported by recommendations in the IASC's Reference Group on Post-Conflict Reintegration.¹⁰⁹

For regional coordination to be successful, there needs to be:

- Clarity in the division of labour and reporting lines among Coordinators.
- Structures that offer a regional overview for the benefit of those in country, and facilitate analysis at the regional level.
- Skilled and experienced Regional Coordinators who provide leadership and advice to Coordinators at country level. The negotiation of access in the DRC, and facilitation of an inter-agency position on regroupement in Burundi, were both cited as hugely valuable contributions by the Great Lakes Regional Coordinator in 1996/7.
- Complementarity between the tasks performed by Regional Coordinators and Coordinators at country level.
- Strong collaboration between all Coordinators in a region. In Rwanda in 1994 during the refugee outflux, separation of coordination jurisdictions between 'inside' and 'outside' Rwanda was described as '*perhaps the greatest weakness of the coordination arrangements*'.¹¹⁰
- Adequate funding to bring people together regularly at regional level.

¹⁰⁸ See Duffield, Jones & Lautze (1998) on the strains between country and regional coordinators.

¹⁰⁹ In its Final Report of 14 August 2000, it recommends regional approaches by conducting UN Country Team field visits across borders to refugee camps, organising regional meetings and the support of headquarters 'to ensure that regional initiatives are not thwarted by bureaucratic or mandate obstacles.' See IASC (2000) op.cit.

¹¹⁰ See Borton, J. (1996) op. cit.

5.3.5 The Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The IASC is the mechanism through which field structures are put in place. Its broad membership – that is, its inclusion of NGOs and the Red Cross Movement – is seen as its most important feature. It is widely praised for providing a forum for regular inter-agency interaction which, according to some, has fostered collaborative spirit. Yet this broad membership is also the subject of criticism, reflecting the ambivalence that characterises much discussion of the IASC. Although participants cite improvements in the IASC over time, frustrations remain.

It seems that within the IASC there is a preoccupation with inclusion rather than representation. Several interviewees remarked that *'Nobody wants to be left out.'* In a body that relies on consensus, decision-making is protracted and difficult issues get dodged. One reason for this is that all participants report to different boards, resulting in weak buy-in and accountability. Yet it cannot be helped by the organisation of the agenda of meetings: participants still express concerns that the meeting agendas are overloaded and issues are not effectively clustered together. As a result, much of the substantive work gets done in the corridors rather than at the meetings.

Although the Secretary-General's proposal to establish an IASC steering committee – in order to achieve a more dynamic and focused body – was formally rejected by the IASC, a *de facto* steering group has emerged through the informal but regular consultations among the heads of OCHA, UNCHR, UNICEF and WFP. (Hitherto, this was one of the all too rare all female groupings in the UN.) Although this is said to be effective by some of those included in it, it excludes those that are said to make the IASC unique – that is, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement.

All of this has a direct bearing on decision-making over decisions about field coordination structures. Such decisions appear to be characterised by protracted discussion and debate among UN agencies, much of it taking place outside the IASC meetings and thus minimising the role of non-UN members in agreeing such arrangements. Furthermore, the process appears heavily oriented to accommodating the preferences and politics of the major UN operational agencies rather than solely focusing on the demands of the situation on the ground. As Resident Coordinators are increasingly designated through the UN Development Group (UNDG), the emphasis on the combined Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator model further intensifies the exclusion of non-UN members of the IASC on humanitarian coordination decisions. Where Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators are also being designated SRSG – such as in Sierra Leone – and the Humanitarian Coordinator is thus also responsible for the political and military strategy of the UN, this exclusion is perhaps all the more significant (see Section 6 for discussion of the problematic aspects of this).

The weak links between staff in the field and those in headquarters also impinge on the IASC's decision-making and effectiveness. Doubts were expressed about the IASC's responsiveness to coordination difficulties on the ground. (On this point, the team was struck by the size and seniority of the Inter-Agency Mission that visited the DRC in December 2000 in order to resolve coordination difficulties. However, this did not appear to be part of a systematic process of monitoring of all humanitarian coordination structures and making any necessary changes.)

Significantly, in the field there is little awareness of the IASC's role or sense that the field can make claims on the time of the IASC. Although Humanitarian Coordinators may be invited to attend the IASC when their countries are being discussed, the process of formulating a policy on regroupement in Burundi was one of the rare occasions where IASC-wide policy was generated in the field and only afterwards sent to New York.

It is apparent that much could be done to improve communication in both directions. The IASC needs to improve its monitoring. Humanitarian Coordinators and their teams have a key role to play in ensuring more systematic dissemination and implementation of key IASC initiatives and statements, as well as feeding back to the appropriate part of the IASC on key issues which need debate and a policy view. Ensuring that the IASC is systematically replicated at the field level – a point that has been recommended many times but still does not always happen – is another aspect to this.

However, studies and interviewees alike perceived the potential of the IASC.¹¹¹ The words of one UN interviewee sum this up well: *'OCHA has in its hand a fantastic tool. Why doesn't it use it? Why not try to make it the voice of the humanitarian community?'* Yet, as discussed above and below, advocacy, and OCHA's role in it leaves much room for improvement. Given the advocacy experience and expertise that resides among non-UN members of the IASC, measures that minimise their role in the IASC further jeopardise the IASC's potential influence and impact.

Thus for this study, the key areas for improvement are:

1. More focus on the situation's demands in decision-making over the appointments of Coordinators.
2. Better monitoring of coordination structures in the field.
3. The instigation of more systematic consultation and communication processes through coordination teams on the ground.
4. Strengthening IASC-wide advocacy.

5.4 Conclusion

This section has set out some of the tasks, services and structures that are seen as useful for coordination, as well as some of those that have been less successful. Some of the tasks and services that are most valued are among the weakest aspects of current coordination. It is also notable that they are also the tasks that are essential to facilitate integrated responses to needs for humanitarian assistance and protection, that is analysis, devising strategies with clear goals and standards for the response, advocacy – including negotiating access and sustaining a framework of consent – and monitoring and evaluating impact.

Improving the provision of services will be critical to improving the ability of coordination teams to persuade others that coordination adds value. Improving the ability of coordination teams to perform the integrating tasks is critical to improve the quality and impact of humanitarian response.

The elements above offer suggestions for what should be part of a standard package for coordination provided for the benefit of humanitarian actors. However, while it is essential that such functions are more consistently provided and performed to a high standard, complex emergencies by their definition preclude a one-size-fits-all policy. The essential task of improving the capacity of the UN to supply coordination must include awareness and analysis of the differing demands for coordination that different crises pose. Thus the packages should be a menu of possible options and arrangements on which the IASC should decide in accordance with the demands of the particular context and emergency.

Debating and agreeing this package is important. OCHA, in close discussion with IASC members, should draw together the lessons from this study into a package of coordination services and tools, along with the prototype office structures and staff competencies associated with providing them. This can then be used as a menu of options on offer for all Coordinators.

¹¹¹ For example, see Duffield, Jones & Lautze (1998) op. cit.

6: LIAISING WITH MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTORS

The preceding chapters have focused on presenting findings on coordination between humanitarian actors. This section focuses on the interface between humanitarian actors and political and military actors and strategies. The study's ToR asked whether, in different instances, the relationship between humanitarian, development, political and military actors is seen to be coherent and mutually reinforcing. The team took the decision to focus on military and political actors rather than relief and development linkages, as this remains the focus of ongoing research by the IASC.¹¹²

As noted in Section 2, the interface between humanitarian actors and political and military strategies has a huge impact on the conduct of humanitarian action. The scope of this study prohibits detailed discussion of the various facets of these interactions. Rather, this section focuses on the tensions within the UN around some of the interrelationships of its constituent parts.

6.1 The Drive for Coherence and the View from the Ground

It is instructive that this study's ToR asked about the coherence between political, military and humanitarian actors. On the one hand, key political players in and around the UN are pushing for humanitarian aid to be coherent with political and military aims. It is hard to pin down a precise definition of this coherence, however. The term is variously used to mean that all aspects of UN policy should serve the same goals, that humanitarians should contribute to political goals, that political actors should not leave humanitarians in a policy vacuum, and that implementing multifaceted strategies in complex settings should not be confounded by bureaucratic divisions. The drive towards integration of all elements of the UN's action in a particular country into one coherent strategy can be traced back to the document, 'An Agenda for Peace', and is reflected in the logic behind the Secretary-General's Secretariat reforms.¹¹³

On the other hand, all three case studies offered powerful examples of the necessity for UN agencies in particular and humanitarian agencies in general to demonstrate their independence from the contentious political strategies of the UN. The message that came loud and clear from interviewees was that to achieve any respect for humanitarian principles and action, humanitarian actors have to continually demonstrate their independence from political and military strategies and action, whether of belligerents, UN Member States, national and regional militaries, or UN peace operations. How this is maintained is a matter of ingenuity. As one interviewee commented: *'It is art not science on the ground.'*

Yet the nature of the political and military strategies and how beneficiaries and belligerents see them is perhaps the key determinant for how humanitarians position themselves.¹¹⁴ Interviewees stressed that separation on the ground is not always necessary, or possible. The nature of the context affects the relationship. Whether or not peace operations are mandated under Chapter Six or Seven of the UN Charter (with the critical distinguishing element of consent) is one factor in the complex calculation that humanitarians have to make in terms of how to relate to UN political and military strategies. Interviewees and studies argued that association with the military might be necessary for security or access.¹¹⁵ Others suggested that where there is a clear shift from war to peace, humanitarians might retain distance during war and cooperate more closely after that. Yet in all instances, it remains essential that humanitarian action retains its independence.

¹¹² See Kent, R. (1999) Bridging the Gap: A Report on Behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Post-Conflict Re-Integration. (UNDP).

¹¹³ For a full discussion of the genesis, development and implications of coherence, see Macrae, J. & Leader, N. (2000) *Shifting Sands: the search for 'coherence' between political and humanitarian responses to complex emergencies* (ODI: London), HPG Report 8.

¹¹⁴ On this point, see Smillie, I. (2000) 'Inside the wire? Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies', mimeo.

¹¹⁵ For example, Donini (1998) op. cit. p. 103.

In Somalia, the relationship between humanitarian and political actors is dogged by contentions over the extent to which the UN is supporting the TNG as the basis for centralised authority over Somalia. The incipient administrations in both Puntland and Somaliland both refuse to recognise the TNG as a central authority, and the representative of the Secretary-General was declared persona non grata in Somaliland as a result of the UN's support for the TNG. The UN humanitarian agencies described how they had to distance themselves from *'that part of the UN'* in order to maintain operational effectiveness and personal security. One international NGO chose to withdraw from all committees in the SACB except sectoral technical committees because it perceived the UN to have neglected its humanitarian responsibilities by giving legitimacy to what the international NGO argued was a belligerent group. It believed the UN had therefore implicitly declared itself as politically partisan.

Likewise in the DRC, tensions between humanitarian actors and the political and military were animated by the concern of the humanitarians to distance themselves from a peace operation apparently discredited in the eyes of the population. One debate centred on the potential negative implications for the Humanitarian Coordinator being designated the Deputy SRSG. Another bone of contention was the role of the Humanitarian Liaison Officers (HLOs) of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).¹¹⁶ Although agreement to incorporate the HLOs into the OCHA offices had been hammered out on the ground in Goma and Kisangani, in Kinshasa, MONUC's director of civil affairs proposed that MONUC should be doing humanitarian coordination. This was interpreted by one interviewee as MONUC *'doing an Angola'* – using humanitarian aid as a way to retain presence and avoid downsizing in the absence of forward movement in the Lusaka Peace Process.

In the DRC, NGOs and UN agencies alike were at pains to distance themselves from MONUC. Again, UN staff described having to explain to local populations, authorities and NGOs that they were *'not the political part of the UN'*. This extended to international NGOs not attending meetings convened by MONUC in Kinshasa in order to demonstrate their separation. As a UN staff member remarked, *'Wherever we are associated with political strategies, we increase our own vulnerability and risk.'*

6.2 Views in the UN Secretariat

The situation on the ground is compounded by the fact that, at the highest levels in the Secretariat, views are divided, or appear to fluctuate, on whether humanitarian assistance should be insulated from or integrated into broader political frameworks. The Secretary-General has stressed the importance of respecting the distinction between humanitarian and military activities in order to prevent irreparable damage to the principle of impartiality and humanitarian assistance.¹¹⁷ But he has also argued the converse.¹¹⁸ Among high level personnel within the Secretariat who were interviewed, humanitarian agencies' desire for distance was variously characterised as an attempt to avoid control or discipline, as bureaucratic blocking, or as an aversion to dialogue. Such views were often accompanied by arguments about how humanitarian aid must necessarily be subject to political priorities and, where possible, serve the UN's political agenda. (Assertions that humanitarian aid does more harm than good buttressed the logic of this position.) One interviewee in the Secretariat talked of humanitarian aid as a vital part of a *'hearts and minds strategy'* for peacekeepers.

6.3 The Role of the SRSG

Tensions also converge around debates about the role of SRSGs and the extent to which the SRSG is accountable for all aspects of the UN's strategy in any given country. In countries where peace operations are deployed, the primacy of the SRSG has been the proposed mechanism by which coherence is assured. However, interviews revealed that in a number of instances SRSGs have interpreted 'coherence' as a justification for them to gain political mileage from control over humanitarian assets. Ockwell (1999) further substantiates this, noting that SRSGs in Afghanistan, Angola, Somalia and Liberia all requested WFP to *'adjust their programmes'* to facilitate their political negotiations. For the politicians this may be expedient. But for the humanitarians it was necessary to resist such 'coherence' in order to preserve the distinction between political and humanitarian spheres essential to sustaining respect for humanitarian principles.

¹¹⁶ MONUC is one of the first missions to have a civil affairs unit, including sections for child protection, human rights and humanitarian affairs.

¹¹⁷ Annan, K. (2000c) op. cit.

¹¹⁸ Annan, K. (2000a) Statement of the Secretary-General to the meeting of the Security Council on humanitarian aspects of issues before the Council, 9 March (United Nations: New York).

The Humanitarian Coordinator has a key role to play in upholding this distinction. The enthusiasm in some quarters for Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators to also become deputy to the SRSG – under discussion in the DRC; now a reality in Sierra Leone – further complicates the picture for the humanitarians in projecting a clear image of their independence from political strategies.

6.4 Coherence and the Brahimi Report

A key part of the coherence debate coalesces around the silence about the nature of the strategic goals of coherent strategies.¹¹⁹ For example, the push for all aspects of UN strategies to converge around peacebuilding in the wake of the Brahimi report is a form of 'coherence' that is largely seen as unproblematic, yet it masks unarticulated political agendas and the potential politicisation of humanitarianism. In the report, the content of peacebuilding is depoliticised, stripped of the questions about whose interests it serves. This vagueness masks the potential for peacebuilding to be the fulfilment of the 'monopolitics of liberal peace'.¹²⁰ This is reinforced by the report's silence on when to intervene to conduct peacebuilding. It cannot be assumed that peacebuilding, like peacekeeping, is apolitical.

Nor can it be assumed that peacebuilding is humanitarian.¹²¹ The Brahimi report's proposal that humanitarian aid buttress the success of peace operations by giving Force Commanders the wherewithal to provide humanitarian assistance is a powerful example of the potential for politicisation.¹²²

6.5 The Potential Divisions among the Humanitarians

As with intra-humanitarian coordination, the relationship of UN agencies with non-UN humanitarians is a critical part of the debate about the interface between political, military and humanitarian action. The coherence sought or required of UN humanitarians has a major significance for their relationship with other humanitarian actors. As one humanitarian agency in the DRC put it, *'The more the UN combines the two, the more difficult it is for us.'* While some parts of the UN were clear that greater proximity to MONUC would jeopardise their relationship with NGOs, senior officials within MONUC dismissed this as an exaggeration, arguing that NGOs should not dictate to the UN. Key players in the UN Secretariat also appear dismissive of any dilemma, arguing that UN agencies have different responsibilities from NGOs. This is clearly true. However, the humanitarian label links all those who use it.

Furthermore, NGOs are key players in the humanitarian system. As one UN interviewee commented, *'What is not understood in this building [the Secretariat] is that NGOs do the majority of the response.'* Questions raised by interviewees included: if UN humanitarians are required to get closer to the political and military, will they lose their implementing partner NGOs who are the bulk of the implementing capacity? Will OCHA lose the other UN agencies? How will this affect the coordination and implementation of humanitarian action by the UN?

6.6 Conclusion

What emerges most strongly is the contrast between the emphasis on coherence from the key players in the Secretariat and the concern of humanitarian actors on the ground to guard their independence – not as end in itself but as the cornerstone of practical strategies to attempt to sustain a framework of consent from belligerents. This frequently involves demonstrating separation from political and military actors.

¹¹⁹ For a critique of an absence of framework or conceptual basis to guide military and humanitarian interaction see Lightburn, D. 'NATO and its New Role' in Whitman, J. & Pocock, D. (1996) *After Rwanda: The Coordination of United Nations Humanitarian Assistance* (Macmillan Press: London).

¹²⁰ That is, the UN institutions will take on responsibility to deliver a blueprint that is built on narrow disciplinary structures in much the same way that the World Bank and the IMF have pushed the 'mono-economics' of structural adjustment. See Macrae & Leader (2000) op.cit.

¹²¹ The Brahimi report's attempt to redefine impartiality to imply judgement, rather than its meaning for humanitarians – that is, delivering aid solely on the basis of need, regardless of race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind – highlights the importance of humanitarians resisting its uncritical integration into the peacebuilding agenda.

¹²² For a critique on this see SCHR (2000) op.cit.

What also emerges is the need for greater clarity on the part of all players on their respective roles. This will help to establish a clear division of labour and delimit responsibility among political, military and humanitarian actors, particularly around as yet undefined peacebuilding strategies.

The position that the ICRC adopts in relation to the rest of the humanitarian system offers instructive guidance on how to meet the challenge of articulating and institutionalising the appropriate relationship between political, military and humanitarian strategies and actors in the UN. The ICRC stresses the imperative to coordinate with, but not to be coordinated by, others in the humanitarian system. Or, as another interviewee put it: *'You've got to work closely together and keep your distance.'* Such an approach has four key elements:

1. **Advocacy:** Advocacy is a critical tool in situating humanitarian action in relation to political and military strategy. The endurance of the 'aid does more harm than good' argument among key parts of the Secretariat suggests that humanitarians have not advocated successfully enough about their strategies and actions on the ground. If they are to be effective in the face of dismissive attitudes to humanitarian aid, humanitarians must be clearer and more assertive in their advocacy about the limits and nature of humanitarian action and principles. Humanitarians also have to push politicians, diplomats, political affairs departments, the military, and the UNSC to uphold the right to humanitarian assistance and protection, and to assume their responsibility to work for peace and security. Humanitarian advocacy must highlight the humanitarian implications of political and military action, as well as highlighting the consequences of inaction for populations in danger and those that seek to assist and protect them. Numerous interviewees stressed that the ERC and OCHA should play a robust role in the Secretariat in this regard.
2. **Clear points of contact:** Experience suggests that separation is best maintained by having clear and limited points of contact to enable information flow between political, military and humanitarian strategies and actors. This has been the rationale behind the rise of Civil-Military Cooperation Commissions (CIMICs) and was vital for effective liaison in Somalia, the Former Yugoslavia, and East Timor, to name but a few.¹²³ Ambassador Brahimi's approach in Afghanistan was applauded: although his role was entirely political, he sought information from humanitarian agencies in order to base his decisions in the realities on the ground. Such contact can contribute to more nuanced and profound political analysis on the part of both humanitarians and diplomats to ensure *'a politically informed humanitarian response and a political response informed by humanitarian concerns'*.¹²⁴
3. **Planning:** If this difficult relationship is to be clearly articulated and understood, it will be necessary to plan multifaceted strategies at headquarters and in the field. If not mutually reinforcing, at a minimum strategies must not undermine each other. Such planning is not easy. The struggles that have accompanied the strategic framework experience in Afghanistan offer important insights from which to learn and improve upon.¹²⁵ The timeframes of rapidly developing situations frequently inhibit effective planning. Often the lack of clear leadership and sufficient capacity to translate robust political analysis into integrated responses creates difficulties. Different ethical and political compromises accompany the different aspects of the UN's role. There are many examples of resistance on the part of political or humanitarian players to cooperate with one another.¹²⁶ The Secretariat and agency headquarters must quash these impulses.
4. **Political players should 'pull their weight':** In practice, integration of humanitarian action into political strategies has been diluted by the weakness or absence of any such political strategy, and the *'delegation of responsibility for political analysis and management from the sphere of diplomacy to that of humanitarian action'*.¹²⁷ This highlights how the biggest challenge is not for humanitarians to toe the political line, but for effective political strategies to be put in place to address chronic political conflict and the violation of human rights. As the Brahimi report proposals suggest, this confers responsibility on DPA and DPKO to take on responsibility to provide analysis at the service of the UN system and Member States. Humanitarians should be able to call on the politicians and diplomats for analysis and for diplomatic support and leverage.

¹²³ For a concise and insightful account of the East Timor experience see Elmquist, M. (1999) 'CIMIC in East Timor', mimeo.

¹²⁴ Macrae & Leader (2000) op. cit.

¹²⁵ The reviews of the strategic framework that are currently underway are fundamental to this.

¹²⁶ For example, the findings of the IASC Post-Conflict Reintegration Group say peace processes do not consult humanitarians. Both Somalia and Kosovo case studies revealed how political players were not required to liaise with humanitarians.

¹²⁷ Macrae & Leader (2000) op.cit.

7: OCHA'S ROLE

From its inception, and like its predecessor DHA, OCHA has found itself in the invidious position of having a mandate to coordinate but minimal means or clout to achieve it, in a system that has multiple obstacles to coordination, and shows determined resistance to its coordination role. The fact that the shift from DHA to OCHA cut back on posts funded from the core budget is a further indication of weak institutional commitment to the coordination function. This section briefly presents some of the study's findings on OCHA's role, and outlines some of OCHA's perceived successes, failures, obstacles to change and thus some of the challenges ahead.

7.1 The Successes

OCHA has been judged effective when it has been able to provide dynamic, highly competent and experienced people at the service of the whole humanitarian community. In some instances, these individuals have provided leadership. In others situations, OCHA has provided hardworking, high-calibre people to work alongside the Humanitarian Coordinators. This was generally a feature of the case studies and was noted and valued by people across the system, including NGOs and the Red Cross who, as discussed above, often feel ignored or excluded by the UN.

One particular feature common to successes in leadership or support was the quality of analysis and vision offered by OCHA staff. As highlighted in Section 5, analysis is invaluable in a time-constrained system that has to balance pressures to respond with devising strategies to meet needs for assistance and protection and the challenge of situating humanitarian action in relation to political and military strategies.

Another feature of OCHA's successes has been in negotiating access of beneficiaries to humanitarian aid and protection. As noted earlier, there is some ambivalence about whether OCHA should do this for the whole system but the value of past efforts are widely acknowledged as positive.

OCHA increased its credibility in its early days by playing an effective advocacy role. Interviewees emphasised that this needs to be maintained and strengthened, particularly given OCHA's position inside the Secretariat as the principal advisor to the Secretary-General on humanitarian affairs and through the ERC's role representing the broader humanitarian community and its concerns for the victims of conflict and disasters. However, key players also expressed concern about OCHA's ability to be an effective counterweight to the political pressures that converge in the Secretariat. OCHA has conceded that it has not yet fulfilled its potential advocacy role.

7.2 The Failures

Despite the above achievements, OCHA undermines its role by failing to deliver the required coordination services with the right support at the right time with the right resources. All too many staff are slow to be deployed, given uncertain or no contracts, are poorly briefed before getting to the field, and denied effective handovers from previous incumbents of the position. OCHA also contributes to adhocism by failing to standardise the functions it provides from one country to the next, and by having few opportunities for staff to learn from one another.

OCHA is aware that it lacks the administrative procedures to support an organisation in the field. Both the structural constraints of an office divided between New York and Geneva and financial constraints were partly blamed by interviewees but weak management was also criticised.

This combination of financial, structural and management constraints were also cited as the cause of the contractual difficulties that beset OCHA's staff, leading to high staff turnover. For an organisation that depends so heavily on the calibre of its people this should be considered a critical failure.

7.3 The Threats to Change

Along with weak management there are other obstacles to implementing change, within and without OCHA. The strength of UN agencies' suspicions of OCHA, particularly evident in concerns about OCHA's Change Process, do not bode well.

In the DRC and Kosovo, the team was struck by repeated agency efforts to minimise the profile accorded to OCHA even where OCHA staff were chiefly responsible for a particular action. In debates about coordination options for the DRC prior to the December 2000 inter-agency mission, no UN interviewee mentioned OCHA's role in coordination. The resistance of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Kosovo to name the head of the OCHA office as his deputy could be seen as another manifestation of this.

Yet OCHA also jeopardises its potential achievements when it fails to consult or engage others effectively.¹²⁸ It is clearly tempting for OCHA to circumvent others when to do otherwise risks impasse because of the entrenched resistance in parts of the UN to OCHA performing its mandated role, or because of the time consumed in settings where time is precious. Yet evidence suggests that failing to engage others is simply counter-productive for OCHA's credibility among agencies (even if not for timely responses to people in need).

OCHA needs to be clear that it is at the service of the system. Its Change Management report is clear, as are those at the highest levels within OCHA, that service is critical to OCHA's role. Yet among field staff, one gets an impression that some staff are resistant to being accorded what they see as a subservient role. The risk is that OCHA loses sight of the role it has to enhance the efforts and operations of others and that coordination activities become an end in themselves.

The push from higher levels within OCHA to raise OCHA's profile also feeds fears that OCHA's service orientation is a rhetorical device rather than an organisational commitment. In the inevitable search for funds, it was clear that OCHA should be seeking funding for coordination and coordinated outcomes rather than for its own agency profile. OCHA should also be clear that its profile will be earned by the reputation of the services it provides and the quality of work it does, rather than through the pursuance of profile for its own sake.

As highlighted above, although the support of key donors is clearly important for OCHA to be able to play its mandated role, it is also vital that OCHA resists being solely driven by donor preferences and agendas. OCHA must resist the temptation to repeat the DHA experience of broadening its activities and thus diluting its impact in its core tasks. Such resistance is also essential if OCHA is to be an effective advocate on the rights to humanitarian assistance and protection: donor governments that are 'Friends' of OCHA are among those responsible for the skewed geographical allocation of humanitarian aid.

It is also important as donor support may contain a sting in the tail: donor willingness to place trust funds in OCHA's hands feeds the fears of other agencies about mushrooming services and empire-building. Several OCHA interviewees commented that DHA's trust funds that had been cut are re-emerging. While welcomed by some – particularly some staff within OCHA who are exhausted by the frustration of being expected to support coordination but having 'nothing to offer' – it is not clear that this enthusiasm translates into greater donor commitment to the discipline and focus that coordinated outcomes requires. Donors may be setting OCHA up to fail.

7.4 Conclusion: The Challenges

OCHA's unenviable position of having a mandate that is undermined by lack of authority, resistance from UN agencies, and uncertain funding (as well as fluctuating performance on its own part) is another prime example of the structural obstacles to UN coordination. Setting aside the possibility of fundamental structural change, this section has focused on how OCHA can build its legitimacy and gain support. It has highlighted that, in the field, OCHA's authority comes from providing quality coordination services that are needed through the quality of its staff. The team strongly suggests that OCHA pursue this role, and become a centre of excellence for coordination skills, tools and systems in the countries in which it operates. To do this it needs to be able to get into the field quickly with good people and the necessary equipment. This is something that is desired throughout the system.

¹²⁸ The focal points for this study in WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP and DPA correctly laid this charge at the conduct of the early stages of this study.

Yet fundamental to OCHA's role is its position in the Secretariat – in the words of one interviewee, OCHA is *'half in and half out'*. That is, OCHA and the ERC, while being part of the humanitarian community, also has its membership of the Senior Management Group, its role in ECHA and ECPS, and its regular briefings of the president of the UNSC, has a seat at the table of the Secretary-General, as well as clear points of contact with the political and peacekeeping parts of the Secretariat, and, critically, the key decision-making organ on peace and security on the UN Member States. This puts it in a unique position for advocacy. It also presents a distinct challenge for OCHA: both to leverage its proximity to the Secretary-General's office from which it can derive authority, while continuing to engage in robust advocacy with the Secretary-General and the highest levels of the Secretariat *'fighting the humanitarian's corner'*.

Indeed, a very clear message that came out of this study was the importance of OCHA maintaining and expanding its advocacy role. At the highest levels in the Secretariat, this advocacy should focus on challenging particular interpretations of coherence as outlined in the previous section. This study's findings suggest that it is vital for OCHA to strategise with its sister UN agencies and other humanitarians about how to push this advocacy agenda and to boost the sense that OCHA is representing a shared humanitarian viewpoint during UN Secretariat debates and decisions.

As a result of its Change Process, OCHA has set itself important goals.¹²⁹ OCHA's challenge now is a paradigmatic one: to elicit the support of others – agencies, the Secretariat, and Member States – to allow and enable it to implement the Change Process's recommendations and successfully fulfil its mandate. To persuade its critics, OCHA must get better at doing what it is allowed to do.

Specific Areas for Action:

- **Coordination services and tools:** In addition to the experiences laid out in Section 5, the team concludes that OCHA should consolidate and develop its materials on coordination, drawing on its existing documents, including the UNDAC Handbook, as well as other agency handbooks. In addition, OCHA should be able to provide coordination training materials.
- **Excellence in access negotiations, advocacy and political analysis** are all seen as key roles for OCHA. To do such negotiations effectively requires rock solid analysis, as well as back-up capacity and resources devoted to this time-consuming activity.
- **Building in predictability:** The IASC should urgently agree standard operating procedures for OCHA field offices. If OCHA is to play an effective role in offering coordination services for the benefit of Coordinators, it is essential that the nature of the support and the nature of the relationship are clarified and agreed at the IASC. This includes the question of whether the head of an OCHA office should also be the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator. OCHA should ensure that such services are consistently provided across the world. Bringing staff together regularly to learn from one another's experiences is one route by which to assess consistency and improve practice.
- It is imperative that OCHA **retains highly competent core staff**. Current levels of turnover are disruptive and threaten loss of capacity. In addition, getting secondments from other humanitarian agencies was seen as a key to the success of the DHA, and should remain so for OCHA. Such secondments should be seen as important for staff development rather than as deviation from career progression in the specific agency. It should also be possible for senior OCHA staff to have secondments to other UN agencies and, indeed, to Red Cross agencies and international NGOs. The latter option would strengthen the skills of OCHA staff while the former could increase ownership and interest from UN agencies in enabling OCHA to fulfil its mandate.
- In its concern to **make coordination services more systematic**, it will be important that OCHA does **not merely provide another layer or allow coordination activities to become an end in themselves**. Where coordination is already happening, OCHA should offer to facilitate, add expertise, or assist by relieving others of their responsibilities for coordination.
- While the onus is in part on OCHA to perform and persuade, the study team maintains that there should also be **pressure on agencies to respect OCHA's mandate** from the Secretary-General and donors.

¹²⁹ 'Early deployment of sufficient, qualified OCHA personnel in support of a Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator is an important element in successful humanitarian coordination...Coordination is effective only if our partners perceive its 'value-added', in particular at the field level. OCHA must strive to create a culture of excellence by providing the best possible tools, managers and personnel in support of the R/HC and its humanitarian partners.' The report notes the list of functions of an OCHA field office that link with the tasks of the Humanitarian Coordinator. It notes the need to increase its headquarters support to its increased presence in the field.

8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The Obstacles and Incentives to Change

There are two particularly striking characteristics of the discussion of humanitarian coordination. The first is the dichotomy between the resounding consensus about *why* coordination should be done – to maximise the effectiveness of humanitarian action – and yet the continuing ferocity of the debate about *how* it should be done. As this study has noted, the greater the focus on why coordination is important, the greater the likelihood that the debate diminishes and that effective coordination is done.

The second is that there is so little that is new to say. This has been a theme of this study as it presents the conclusions from past studies, interviews and case studies. The report has set out in some detail the recurring picture over a decade of UN humanitarian agencies whose governance structures, funding sources, weak management and institutional cultures all constitute obstacles to effective coordination. It has also described the blight of adhocism that remains in how the UN system coordinates. The repeated refrains of reviews and studies suggest that a pivotal problem confronting the system is its inability to change. This is the result of resistance on the part of Member States and donors, and weaknesses internal to the system.

The evidence also reveals a 'system' that shows determined resistance to cede authority to anyone or any structure. Despite the urgency of the task, and the potential impact on human lives of poorly coordinated humanitarian responses, the ERC, OCHA and Coordinators at the field level are all denied the ability to direct or manage humanitarian responses. Instead, all have to work on the basis of coordination by consensus. In the face of the obstacles, this is an uphill struggle.

To eradicate some of these obstacles requires fundamental change. As this study has sought to emphasise, UN Member States and donor governments have pivotal responsibility for the structure and performance of the UN humanitarian system – and thus the changes necessary to resolve the problems that derive from them.

Yet despite the manifold obstacles to coordination, remarkably, humanitarian coordination does happen – although performance remains patchy – either because effective Coordinators build consensus around coordination through strong leadership, because the coordination on offer is clearly added value, or because the context acts as an incentive to coordinate.

Thus the study concludes that there is much that UN agencies can do to maximise the likelihood that humanitarian response is effectively coordinated, despite the structural obstacles. It is incumbent upon them that they do so.

It is worth emphasising the responsibility that the UN has in the eyes of others. Governments and humanitarian agencies have made their expectations clear. Indeed, Resolution 46/182 said it best, stating that the UN has '*a central and unique role to play in providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of the international community.*' Yet this study has shown that there are others, in particular donors, who will fill any vacuums left by a UN system that fails to deliver on its central coordinating role. Thus, the onus is on the UN to perform to prevent the further bilateralisation of humanitarian response.

8.2 Options for Change

Given these conclusions, the options for improving coordination range from fundamental change to remove obstacles, to more incremental ones to increase the incentives to coordinate. It is important to reiterate that none of the options for change or recommendations are entirely new. Many of them echo recommendations of studies of coordination over more than a decade. This suggests that **the problem is not a dearth of recommendations** about how to improve coordination, **but a lack of both management accountability for successes or failures and sufficient commitment to improving humanitarian response.**

1. **Fundamental structural reform of the UN's humanitarian operations**

Given the accumulated evidence that consensus models are not strong enough to achieve effective coordination in the face of chronic systemic obstacles, the study believes that there is a strong case to be made for structural reform. Notwithstanding the recent debate around UN reform, the scale of the problem suggests this debate must be reopened if there is genuine commitment to strengthening the humanitarian response of the UN.

The limited scope of this study prohibits systematic consideration of detailed recommendations. But it is clear that the challenge is to construct a body or structure with sufficient authority to be able to manage and guide humanitarian action – whether directly through a management line of one single humanitarian agency, or through a sufficiently powerful new structure that stands above existing funds and programmes to ensure prioritised and integrated responses. Such a structure should link with political actors to devise the political strategies necessary to address the causes of conflict and human suffering, as well as with development actors to ensure effective coordination between relief and development activity. Such a structure would also need to retain the elements currently fulfilled by diverse mandates; it should be both more efficient and responsive; and it should be able to relate effectively to humanitarian actors outside the UN.

In a world of conglomerating NGOs who are increasingly favoured by donors, and where there is greater momentum to integrate UN humanitarian operations into broader peacebuilding approaches, there are some who advocate that the debate should ask yet more fundamental questions about the comparative advantage of the UN. They raise questions about whether, instead of current levels of operational response, the UN should focus on 'core business' such as coordination, setting standards, upholding protection for refugees and IDPs, monitoring, and negotiating access.¹³⁰

2. **Change the funding for humanitarian coordination and increase Coordinators' authority on the ground**

In the interests of more systematic and effective coordination, and to avoid those with coordination responsibilities from competing with others, OCHA should be funded from assessed contributions. At field level, in place of funding particular agencies in response to the Consolidated Appeal, donors should contribute funds to a common fund in the hands of the Coordinator who should be vested with authority to prioritise and allocate funds to the strategy formulated by humanitarian agencies in the field.

3. **Strengthening the Current Decentralised System**

At the heart of change is the need for improved management, stronger accountability, and more systematic approaches to coordination.

The current reliance on Coordinators and their teams having to persuade others to coordinate must be buttressed by greater sanction attached to failing to coordinate. The commitment to coordination should be fostered by requiring all staff to focus on the system-wide response to beneficiaries' needs rather than solely on their agency's interests. At a minimum, all agencies must expect and instil greater discipline through conventional management lines so that personnel are assessed and rewarded on the basis of their participation and contribution to inter-agency coordination and coordinated outcomes.

All coordination structures and personnel should have clear guidance, reporting lines and defined relationships with all other key players. There needs to be greater efforts from the system to monitor coordination and to be quicker to resolve difficulties where they occur. Such difficulties should be the subject of evaluation and subsequent lessons to be learnt.

To maximise the ability of coordination teams to persuade others to coordinate, greater financial and management resources should be directed at the provision of coordination services and tools that clearly 'add value' to individual agency operations. This also requires greater leadership by high-calibre, experienced staff. OCHA has an important role to play in this.

¹³⁰ For example, see Ingram (1993) op. cit. Ingram, former WFP director, suggests looking outside the UN system on which to base a restructured humanitarian order. See also Minear, L. in Donini (1998) op. cit.; Righter (1995) op.cit. even suggests the OECD as a focus for coordinating relief.

8.3 The Role of UN Member States and Donors

Effecting any of these options requires action from several quarters. To reiterate: **any change – whether that of enduring systemic change or maximising the effectiveness of the current system – requires changes in the behaviour of Member States and donors.**

Overall, if Member States and donors want better humanitarian coordination, they must be prepared to fund coordination costs and to place their expectations only where mandated responsibilities lie. Funding coordination from assessed contributions is a vital part of this, as is establishing a fund for the ERC to pay Humanitarian Coordinators.

Among the measures to maximise the effect of the current system, donors should support the development and agreement of indicators to assess coordination and its impact as well as the contribution of agencies to it as a criterion for funding. Performance appraisal systems that assess staff on the basis of their commitment to coordination in addition to the willingness of agencies to second competent staff could be among these indicators. Donors should apply greater pressure to UN humanitarian agencies and NGOs to support and respect the role of OCHA, as well as strengthen OCHA to work for the benefit of the humanitarian response rather than its own agency profile. Donors can strengthen their coordination within and among themselves and demonstrate more consistent support to coordination through their funding and their presence on the legislative bodies of organisations (whether the UNSC, UNGA, or Executive Boards).

As well as increasing levels of humanitarian aid to ensure impartial response to all those in need, donors should provide increased resources for efforts aimed at strengthening coordination such as monitoring, appraisal, assessment and shared training. Donors should also contribute to common funds, whether small additional funds for Humanitarian Coordinators to fill gaps in the response or, more radically, a fund to receive all contributions to the CAP. Both measures should be accompanied by donor support for the Coordinator to undertake prioritisation in place of donor earmarking.

8.4 The Role of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has a vital role in strengthening commitment to coordination and coordinated outcomes. He can lend the full weight of his authority to the ERC and insist that agencies respect OCHA's role. He can push for greater system-wide orientation. He can also encourage the heads of the operational agencies to second staff and establish rosters of those available, urge them to support the creation of common funds for management by the Coordinator – whether for filling gaps in response, or more radically, to receive all funds for the CAP – and require that they strengthen the requirement of their staff to contribute to coordinated outcomes by including this in performance appraisals.

The Secretary-General also has a critical role to play in reducing the adhocism that currently blights coordination, for instance by ensuring the implementation of the Brahimi report's recommendations that SRSGs, Force Commanders, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators all have clear guidance, reporting lines and relationships with all other key players. (The reservations regarding other aspects of the report have been outlined above.)

Finally, the Secretary-General has important responsibilities to advocate that humanitarian action retains its independence from political and military strategies of the UN and Member States. For this to be effective, it requires clear points of contact and information exchange between political or humanitarian players. The Secretary-General must quash resistance to this in DPA and DPKO.

8.5 Consolidated Recommendations to the ERC, OCHA and the IASC

The following recommendations combine those elaborated in the text with additional recommendations based on the study's conclusions. These are among the measures that should be well within the grasp of a UN system serious about the effective coordination of action to protect the rights of human beings to protection and assistance.

8.5.1 Recommendations to the ERC and OCHA

OCHA's Change Management Report presents a raft of recommendations to address some of OCHA's weaknesses. This report recommends the following priorities:

1. OCHA, in close discussion with IASC members, should draw together the lessons from this study as well as its current proposals for field coordination into a package of coordination services and tools, along with the prototype office structures and staff competencies associated with providing them. This can then be used as a menu of options on offer for all Coordinators. This should be presented to the IASC for agreement with an associated action plan, including a training programme, to ensure that OCHA can provide quality coordination services.
2. The ERC has a vital role to play in proactive monitoring of the conduct of coordination, particularly at the start of new emergencies, and reporting back to the IASC and to the Secretary-General. The ERC may need an enhanced monitoring and evaluation capacity that reports directly to him/her, using inter alia, indicators as recommended in recommendation A3 below.
3. OCHA should further strengthen the CAP as an inter-agency analysis and strategy-setting process, including working with UN Country Teams to provide analysis tools and facilitation for the process. The involvement in the analytical process of NGOs, the Red Cross Movement and UN political and military actors and analysts should be actively sought.
4. The ERC has a vital role to play in robust advocacy – both within the Secretariat and with UN Member States – on the principles, role and limits of humanitarian action, and the political action required to uphold the right to humanitarian assistance and protection. ECHA and ECPS are important fora for advocacy on the nature, challenges and limits to humanitarian action; the ERC can also press for action in the political, diplomatic and peacekeeping sphere. It will be important to strategise with other humanitarians about how to push this advocacy agenda and to boost the sense that OCHA is able to represent humanitarian actors within the UN Secretariat debates and decisions. The IASC – given its broad membership – is the obvious forum for such strategising.

8.5.2 Recommendations to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

It is recommended that the IASC review the findings of this study and formulate an action plan for follow up. Among the measures that should be included are the following:

A. Appraisal

1. The UN members of the IASC should review and revise existing performance appraisal schemes for all staff. These should include criteria to measure demonstrated contribution to inter-agency coordination and coordinated outcomes. Particular incentives should be attached to secondments to inter-agency efforts.
2. The UN members of the IASC should establish an inter-agency working group to compare and harmonise performance appraisal schemes and the rewards and sanctions associated with contributing to coordination or thwarting it.
3. The IASC should agree performance appraisal criteria and a regular appraisal process for Humanitarian Coordinators. This should include indicators for behaviour or action that would trigger a process of review leading to removal from the position.
4. The IASC should work with donors to identify indicators of coordination and coordinated outcomes as the basis for funding decisions. Performance appraisal systems that assess staff on the basis of their commitment to coordination, and the willingness of agencies to second competent staff, should be among these indicators.

B. Recruitment of Coordination Staff

1. The IASC should intensify its efforts to work with the UNDG and OCHA to agree the competencies and selection processes for Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators. This should include agreement of where skills for Humanitarian Coordinators might differ from or clash with those expected of Resident Coordinators.
2. All IASC member agencies should intensify efforts to establish an inter-agency roster of coordination staff that indicates staff skills and availability. They should do this by undertaking a thorough process of identifying individuals with aptitude for coordination positions – whether as Humanitarian Coordinators or support staff – including those with potential but who may require training.

3. The IASC should explore with non-UN members the potential for extended secondments of NGO personnel as Coordinators and support staff. This would require the agreement of potential training needs necessary for non-UN staff to work for the UN.

C. Induction Processes

1. The IASC should form an inter-agency working group on induction processes to compare current guidance and information provided to new staff. On the basis of this review, this group should develop a series of training materials and processes for generic guidance to help staff anticipate and overcome challenges. This would be provided to all staff going to the field, or as refresher courses for existing staff. Such materials should include information on mandates, activities and competencies of all IASC members, humanitarian principles, Sphere standards, impact indicators, and security, as agreed by the IASC. This could constitute a common UN humanitarian handbook.
2. The IASC should agree that one of the aspects of the coordination package provided by OCHA should include providing induction guidance tailored to the specific context to offer as a service to incoming staff of all humanitarian agencies. This could also have an additional benefit of encouraging staff to deepen their understanding and their political, economic and social analysis that is essential to effective humanitarian response.
3. All IASC members should commit themselves to making handovers between staff more systematic by including them in all job descriptions as a corporate requirement of all departing staff. At headquarters, management should be improved to increase the number of handovers that take place.

D. Monitoring

1. The IASC should agree a process to evaluate field coordination at regular intervals in order to increase both its responsiveness and ability to resolve problems. This could include a) regular reporting against agreed benchmarks to the IASC by IASC members in the field, and b) a process of small inter-agency teams travelling to the field to carry out agreed systematic assessments before reporting back to the IASC.
2. An assessment of the contribution of agencies to coordination and coordinated outcomes should be part of the process of the mid-term CAP review. This could include agency self-assessment against agreed criteria, potentially backed up by independent evaluation.

E. Reporting Lines and Accountability

1. The IASC should agree the relationship, reporting lines and accountability of all those involved in coordination, in particular between the head of the OCHA field coordination unit and the Humanitarian Coordinator.
2. The IASC should agree who will deputise for the Humanitarian Coordinator in all instances, including a protocol for further contingency arrangements should it be necessary to further deputise for the deputy. This should exclude those with responsibilities for operational programmes where there are alternatives. This makes a strong case for the head of OCHA offices being appointed as the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator.

F. Country and Regional Structures

1. IASC members should agree to replicate the IASC at the field level in all instances.
2. IASC members should adopt the same designations of what constitutes a region as a first step to facilitate regional coordination, and should work towards having any regional structures co-located with those of other agencies.
3. IASC members should instigate more systematic consultation and communication with coordination teams in the field.

G. Advocacy

1. The IASC should form an advocacy working group to agree a broad framework for advocacy strategies towards UN Member States, donors, belligerent groups, and other parts of the UN including DPA, DPKO and the Office of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, at headquarters, country and local level. This would include responsibilities for the ERC and IASC members at headquarters and in the field. It is vital that UN agencies continue robust advocacy with donors on their obligations to respect the humanitarian principles of universality and impartiality.
2. All IASC members should collaborate with OCHA in pressing UN Member States to fund coordination – both OCHA and Humanitarian Coordinators – from assessed contributions.

H. Systemisation

1. The IASC should agree a package of coordination services and likely accompanying structures to be prepared by OCHA as the basis for coordination structures in country as standard operating procedure for OCHA. This should include agreement on the potential value of OCHA having a presence in the field at sub-office level to provide effective coordination support.
2. The IASC should make clear specifications on these coordination structures, the required competencies and the reporting relationships as part of all decisions on coordination options considered by the UN and the rest of the IASC.
3. The IASC should agree a matrix of MoUs to be negotiated to complement existing MoUs.

I. On the CAP, all IASC members should work with OCHA to:

1. Strengthen the CAP as a valuable opportunity for inter-agency analysis and strategy setting, including both operational response and advocacy strategies.
2. Require Coordinators to actively seek the involvement of NGOs and the Red Cross Movement in the analysis process, if not the fundraising strategy.
3. Improve the accuracy and transparency of the CAP's assessment of target beneficiaries to increase its use as an advocacy tool. This will help in assessing and comparing international responses to humanitarian need.
4. Give a stronger remit to Coordinators to facilitate prioritised, integrated strategies to respond to humanitarian need.
5. Under effective and accountable Coordinators in an improved system of coordination, donors should be required to place their responses to Consolidated Appeals in a single country fund – rather than funding individual agency activities – in the hands of a Coordinator.

ANNEXE 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference for a Study

Humanitarian Coordination

Lessons from Recent Field Experience

Background

1. The need to coordinate humanitarian assistance in places of armed conflict has long been recognised within the United Nations. The decentralised nature of the UN system, consisting of a number of different programmes and specialised agencies mandated to respond to situations of humanitarian need has made 'coordination' a declared aim of successive Secretaries-General. As the UN found itself (during the 1980s) increasingly obliged to offer humanitarian assistance in situations of internal armed conflict, a 'lead agency' was sometimes appointed from amongst the principal humanitarian agencies, while in other situations special ad hoc coordination bodies were established, such as UNOCA for Afghanistan in 1988 and OEAO for the Horn of Africa. In response to a growing concern that such ad hoc arrangements were not fully satisfactory, the General Assembly, in December 1991, adopted Resolution 46/182, which created the Inter-agency Standing Committee and the post of Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN's humanitarian operations in the field. In 1992 the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), with the ERC serving also as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

2. In 1994, the IASC approved the terms of reference for Humanitarian Coordinators who would 'upon the occurrence of a complex emergency in a country' be appointed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator on behalf of the Secretary General and would be the senior UN official on the ground in charge of 'coordinating' international humanitarian assistance. It was agreed that the UN Resident Coordinator serving in the affected country would 'normally' become the Humanitarian Coordinator. However, two other possibilities were also foreseen, that a Humanitarian Coordinator might be appointed separately from the Resident Coordinator (or in a situation in which there was no Resident Coordinator), or that a 'lead agency' might be designated, whose local Director would exercise the functions of Humanitarian Coordinator. As part of the Secretary-General's reform programme of 1997, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) replaced DHA. In 1998 the UNDP Administrator and the ERC wrote jointly to all Resident Coordinators reminding them that in situations where they found themselves leading the UN's response to a natural disaster, they were responsible directly to the ERC.

3. Today, in most places of armed conflict where the UN has some presence, there is a Humanitarian Coordinator, who is also the Resident Coordinator, reporting to the ERC. The 'lead agency model' however, is also sometimes still employed, most recently in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Kosovo. In both Kosovo and East Timor, where the UN has formed an interim administration, a 'Humanitarian Pillar' has been part of an 'integrated' peacekeeping operation.

4. A number of inter-related processes are underway, which underline the need to sharpen thinking on UN humanitarian coordination. The first is the continuing debate on whether it is possible to identify more clearly the criteria which should be applied in selecting one or other of the three 'models' of humanitarian coordination. This debate was most recently reinvigorated by the intervention of the US Permanent Representative to the UN in several fora, and his request to the Secretary General to employ the 'lead agency model' more frequently.

5. Secondly, the Secretary General's Panel on Peace Operations recently submitted its report with specific recommendations for Secretariat reform, to which the Secretary-General has responded outlining his initial plans for implementation. By dealing almost exclusively with the need to strengthen the mandating, planning, and management of peace-keeping operations, the Panel's recommendations did not address the question of the appropriate relationship between peace-keeping and humanitarian operations of the UN system. Nor did they examine the implications for humanitarian organizations of the new peace-keeping doctrine which they propose. This will need to be developed separately at UN system-wide level.

6. Thirdly, work has recently been completed within the Secretariat (in the form of a Note of Guidance¹) to clarify and make more effective the relationship between the various senior officials deployed to the field, including the Secretary General's representatives, the Humanitarian Coordinators and the Resident Coordinators. This work has run parallel to work in the IASC to clarify the role of Humanitarian Coordinators in relation to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)². Work has also recently been completed in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) on the allocation of responsibilities within the UN system for different aspects of demobilization programmes³.

7. Finally, there are the innovative or at least new and different schemes which have been tried in recent months, related to humanitarian coordination, which deserve study. These include the experiences of humanitarian coordination in Kosovo and East Timor and OCHA's work to establish or strengthen its local offices or units to assist in coordination in a number of other countries.

The Need

8. The need is for a study, which will assist the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to draw lessons from recent experiences in humanitarian coordination, with a view to better understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each coordination model in particular circumstances, leading to a clearer definition of criteria for choosing the most appropriate coordination arrangements in any given situation.

9. A number of relevant studies have been undertaken in recent years⁴. This study needs to take fully into account the lessons offered by previous research, while factoring in lessons from most recent field experience, all in the context of an environment affected by the Brahimi panel and recent work in ECHA, the IASC and the Secretariat. There is also a need for an up to date overview of the actual coordination arrangements currently in place.

Scope of the Study

10. The study is therefore intended to be a resource for the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the IASC. The study should analyse, through both primary research and a review of secondary literature, the range of humanitarian coordination experiences from the field in recent years. The focus should be on helping identify practical and specific arrangements and practices which have worked the best, and those that have failed or need reform, in a way which will respond to the need defined above.

11. Given the wealth of coordination studies that already exist, the study should summarize the principal findings within the existing literature, and carry out primary research only on those cases which have yet to be comprehensively examined.

12. In examining each situation, the study will seek to identify those features of the coordination arrangements which were seen, by those involved, to have provided 'added value', as well as those which were felt not to have contributed to the effective coordination of the overall humanitarian operation. Among the issues to be examined would be the following:

- Is the CAP process perceived as an aid to effective coordination?
- Is the relationship between humanitarian, development and political/military actors seen to be coherent and mutually reinforcing?
- Is access a problem? If so, do humanitarian actors believe that current coordination arrangements ensure that the problem is being addressed as effectively as possible?
- Do all the actors feel that they have the information they need to coordinate their operations effectively with each other? How do they believe that information-sharing and information management could be improved?
- Is sectoral coordination perceived to be working well?
- Has there been any attempt to introduce strategic monitoring of the humanitarian programme?
- Is the coordination model in place perceived by humanitarian actors to be appropriate?

13. The study will need to be informed by:

- (a) Published studies on humanitarian coordination and related topics as well as in-house United Nations evaluations, 'lessons-learned' and other relevant policy documents
- (b) Current debates and discussions within the IASC membership and the UN Secretariat on the strengthening of humanitarian coordination, with a particular focus on recent work on the relationships between SRSGs, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators; and the responsibilities in relation to IDPs and DDR
- (c) The findings of the Secretary General's panel on peace operations and the implementation of the recommendations of the report
- (d) OCHA's recent internal management review and related processes
- (e) Trends in donor attitudes towards humanitarian coordination.

14. The study may look at cases throughout the entire history of UN humanitarian coordination but will focus on experiences since 1992, and will do primary research on current situations.

15. The study will not address coordination arrangements in countries afflicted by natural disasters, since these arrangements are well established and not seen to be in need of review.

16. The study will not need to be long or excessively detailed but will be comprehensive in bringing together all the various elements upon which future deliberations on humanitarian coordination arrangements may best be made.

Methodology

17. The study would be undertaken by a team comprised of two independent consultants and one or more members of the OCHA policy development unit.

18. The study would draw on three primary categories of sources. The first would be extant literature on this subject, including and especially work which has looked at humanitarian coordination arrangements and experiences in specific country settings. The second source would be UN documents and interviews with as wide a range of relevant people as possible, including but not exclusively past and present humanitarian coordinators, OCHA staff, and the staff of various humanitarian agencies and NGOs. The third source would be two or three missions to the field, to examine in greater detail three ongoing humanitarian operations as mentioned above.

19. It is expected that the research including the field missions could be concluded within 2-3 months and that the writing and editing of the paper could be done in approximately four weeks. The final paper is expected to be no more than 15,000 – 20,000 words.

20. An advisory group of focal points from UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, DPA and DPKO will be established to support the study. These focal points will be asked to facilitate the research of the study team in relation to their respective departments and agencies and will be presented with draft of the study for their comments and suggestions.

21. A peer reference group of experts on the subject will also be established to assist the study team at various stages as necessary.

Time Frame

22. Ideally, the two outside consultants would be identified, recruited and begin work in October. The majority of field missions as well as interviews would be completed by mid-December. A draft study would be shared with OCHA as well as the advisory group by late January and a final text completed in February.

Footnotes

1. Note of Guidance on relations between SRSGs, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators – 30 October 2000
2. IASC Policy on Protection of IDPs, Annex 2 – “Supplementary Guidance on the Role of Humanitarian Coordinators”, April 2000.
3. Report of ECHA Task Force on DDR - _____ 2000
4. The study will include a bibliography of recent publications

ANNEXE 2: MATRIX OF COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

This matrix provides an overview of some of the coordination arrangements in countries that have experienced humanitarian crisis. It focuses on arrangements at the national and regional level and is not a comprehensive account of all coordination arrangements in place at sectoral or sub-national levels. It includes both complex emergencies and natural disasters. It was prepared with the assistance of Sally Johnson, Sarah Routley and Karin Kronhoffer.

Country	UN Coordination Mechanisms	Other Country or Regional Coordination Mechanisms	UN Coordination 'Model'	UN Political/Peace Operations
Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (R/HC) is also UNDP Resident Representative (RR). - The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), chaired by Secretary-General in 1997 decided to test a holistic approach, which led to the development of the Strategic Framework. This attempts to bring together the assistance, human rights and peacebuilding components of the UN's work in Afghanistan. - OCHA serves as the secretariat to the Afghanistan Programming Body, which is a joint forum for UN, NGO and donor representatives. - The UN Coordination of Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) acts on behalf of the Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) and operates under the authority of the R/HC to coordinate responses to crisis in the country. - UN Regional Coordination Officers act as field based coordinators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Afghanistan Programming Board (APB) established in 1998, comprising UN agencies, NGOs and donors and has overall responsible for Common Programming. - The Afghan Support Group (ASG) comprising international donors. - The Agency Coordination Body For Afghan Relief (ACBAR) established in 1988 comprising international and local NGOs coordinating through regional and sectoral sub-committees. - Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB) established in 1991 comprising local NGOs - British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG) comprising British NGOs. - Islamic Coordination Council (ICC) comprising local and international NGOs. - Southern / Western Afghanistan and Baluchistan Association for Coordination (SWABAC) established in 1988. 	<i>Current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - is also the UNDP RR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Special Mission For Afghanistan (UNISMA) is tasked with finding a peaceful political solution. - SRSG is also Head of UNSMA - UNOCHA is responsible for mine action programmes .
Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - In 2000, while the Ministry of Social Affairs and Reintegration is the main counterpart and coordinates humanitarian activities, the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (UCAH) coordinates the international response. - OCHA Field Office <i>Past:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UCAH established by DHA in 1993 to support the SRSG who was given the mandate to coordinate humanitarian activities. - WFP staff member seconded to DHA to become director of UCAH and later became UNDP RR/RC in 1994 until 1995. - UCAH Demobilisation and Reintegration Office (UCAH-DRO) established in 1994 following a period of peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Angola Humanitarian Coordination Group (HCG) was established in 1995 to follow up humanitarian initiatives taken in connection with the 1994 Lusaka Protocols, and was headed by the Minister of Social Affairs, Relief and Reintegration and the UCAH Director. The group included Angolan government ministries, UNITA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, with observer status granted to some donors, NGOs and ICRC. 	<i>Current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC <i>Past:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UCAH director was the RR and RC after 1994 	<i>Current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Office in Angola (UNOA) - SRSG is also Head of UN Office <i>Past:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Angola Verification Missions I-III (UNAVEM) January 1989 – June 1997 - Mission of Observers in Angola (MONUA) June 1997 – February 1999
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (except Kosovo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - OCHA Field Office (whose Head is Deputy HC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe - Balkans Operational Agencies Coordination (BOAC) meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - is also UNICEF Regional Director 	
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Kosovo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - OCHA Field Office (whose Head is Deputy HC) - UN Development Coordinator - UNDAC support module in 1999 	<i>Current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kosovo Transitional Civilian Administration - Office of Regional Coordinator for the UN in the Balkans was established in May 1999 to coordinate all UN activities. - NGO coordination Humanitarian Community Information Centre, part of the EMG - EU Stability Pact (and UNHCR-led Humanitarian Issues Working Group affiliated to EU Stability Pact <i>Past:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Albania, an Emergency Management Group (EMG) was led by the Government. - OCHA staff were part of an Inter-Agency Coordination Unit (IACU) within UNHCR in Kosovo, which operated until August 1999 when its resources and responsibilities were transferred to the Office of the Deputy SRSG. 	<i>Current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - Is also UNHCR Special Envoy for FRY <i>Past:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNHCR was lead agency 	<i>Current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since June 1999 - SRSG is also Head of UNMIK
Burundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - OCHA Field Office - OCHA created a Common Framework of Reference composed of UN, NGO and government ministry representatives to discuss common interests and issues in 1999 . 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - UNDP RR is the HC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Office Burundi (UNOB) - SRSG is also Head of UNOB

Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience

Country	UN Coordination Mechanisms	Other Country or Regional Coordination Mechanisms	UN Coordination 'Model'	UN Political/Peace Operations
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SRSG on Situation of Human Rights
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - UNHCR is responsible for IDP-related issues - OCHA Humanitarian Coordination Unit (HCU) was established to support UNHCR in IDP activities, and to support the work of the RC, the UN, NGOs and the Government. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special Adviser to SG on International Assistance
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - OCHA established a Field Office in 1998 to promote planning and the implementation of programmes with Government counterparts - Food Aid Liaison Unit within WFP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO Funding Mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - is also WFP Country Director 	
Democratic Republic of Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - Joint OCHA/UNDP Humanitarian Coordination Unit (HCU) - Provincial Coordinators in Eastern DRC - OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officers in five provinces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Office of the SRSG and Regional Humanitarian Adviser for the Great Lakes region in Nairobi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC (ad interim is also UNICEF rep.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) from November 1999 - SRSG is also Head of MONUC
East Timor	<p><i>Current:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy SRSG for Humanitarian Assistance & Emergency Rehabilitation (UNTAET) - UN Development Coordinator <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OCHA's Assistant ERC was appointed as HC to lead an inter-agency team of specialists made up of different IASC members and deployed immediately following the crisis in order to provide critical coordination services. - OCHA Field Coordination Unit established 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - Deputy SRSG for Humanitarian Assistance & Emergency Rehabilitation (UNTAET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) from October 1999 - SRSG and Transitional Administrator
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - OCHA Regional Disaster Response Adviser (RDRA) - supports RCs and UNDMT/UNDAC teams in South America. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	
Eritrea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC also responsible for IDPs - OCHA Field Office supports the R/HC and the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission in coordinating the humanitarian response; it also acts as secretariat for the Emergency Humanitarian Needs Assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eritrean Relief and Reintegration Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) since July 2000 - SRSG for Eritrea/ Ethiopia
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - Emergency Unit for Ethiopia established in 1984 as a UNDP project, but executed by UNOPS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OCHA Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for drought in Horn of Africa (in place following recommendation by WFP). - OCHA Liaison Office was established in 1998 in collaboration with the UN DPA and the Economic Commission for Africa, and acts as the focal point on humanitarian issues. It liaises on behalf of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), with the OAU and ECA, IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) since July 2000 - SRSG for Ethiopia and Eritrea
Fiji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OCHA Regional Disaster Response Adviser - support RCs and UNDMT/UNDAC teams in the South Pacific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - OCHA Field Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Georgian/Abkz Coordinating Council was initiated by the UN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) from August 1993 - SRSG is also Head of Mission
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - UN Disaster Management Team as back up 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - is also UNDP RR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) - SRSG is also Head of MINUGUA
Guinea Bissau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - OCHA Field Office closed in March 2000. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - UN Disaster Management Team as back up 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - is also UNDP RR 	
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - OCHA Field Office 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC 	

Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience

Country	UN Coordination Mechanisms	Other Country or Regional Coordination Mechanisms	UN Coordination 'Model'	UN Political/Peace Operations
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OCHA Regional Disaster Response Adviser supports RCs and UNDMT/UNDAC teams in Asia. 			
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - Humanitarian Affairs Office in RC office assists as focal point for humanitarian issues <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Special Coordinating Office for Liberia (UNSCOL) created in 1990 under the UN Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO)/UNDP Representative. It facilitated the UN relief programme until the inception of DHA - Following renewal of the conflict in 1996, the Humanitarian Coordinator headed the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office (HACO). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) - NGO-Management Steering Group (MSG). 	<p><i>Current:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC and separate RC in 1998 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Office in Liberia (UNOL) - SRSG is also Head of UNOL <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) Sept. 1993-1997
Mitch affected countries: El Salvador Honduras Guatemala	<p><i>Current:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - UN DAC and UNDMT also involved <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDMTs established operational groups with sectoral responsibilities, held regular or ad hoc head of agency meetings and gathered and disseminated information in order to coordinate the actions of municipal, national and international teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Emergency Committees (NEC) consisting of local authorities, Red Cross and civil society locally undertook coordination. The Heads of State in the various countries presided over the NEC structures in order to oversee the emergency response. - Local Emergency Committees were established by the mayor's office in some areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - is also UNDP RR 	
Mozambique (floods)	<p><i>Current:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - UNDAC team dispatched by OCHA. <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the floods, three UNDAC teams were fielded as an integral part of the national coordination body, strengthening its management capacity. - WFP established an air operations cell to coordinate military assets - the strong military/civil cooperation was led by the UN at the request of the Government. - OCHA conducted civil-military cooperation courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Government leads in the coordination of international and national response through the national coordination body, the National Institution for Disaster Management (INGC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC 	
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC - OCHA Field Office 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC 	
Republic of Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC 	
Russian Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HC for Northern Caucasus - OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer has supported the HC - OCHA Field Office in Moscow and Nazran 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework of cooperation with the Russian Government on humanitarian action in Northern Caucasus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC and HC separate - HC is also UNHCR Representative 	
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - OCHA Field Office - UN Joint Reintegration Programming Unit' is joint UNHCR/UNDP coordination unit - Field officer in Gisenyi to cover north west and to provide back up to Eastern DRC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC 	<p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) October 1993 - March 1996
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (HACU) is operated jointly by OCHA/UNDP - The Strategic Framework for Sierra Leone - The Humanitarian Information Centre provides a link between UNAMSIL, UN agencies and NGOs - Regional Coordinators for North and West of the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The two major national coordination mechanisms are the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) and the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR). - Line Ministries lead coordination in the their respective areas of responsibility - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - R/HC is also DSRSG 	<p><i>Current:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) from October 1999 <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) July 1998 - October 1999

Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience

Country	UN Coordination Mechanisms	Other Country or Regional Coordination Mechanisms	UN Coordination 'Model'	UN Political/Peace Operations
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - The United Nations Coordination Unit (UNCU), a UNDP project supported by OCHA, assists the R/HC - In the north, UN Focal Points facilitate coordination and assist the local administrations - In the south UNCU have deployed a Humanitarian Affairs Officer - The UNCU supports and provides funding for the UN Chief Security Advisor, in order to promote the safety of all humanitarian staff - In Nairobi, the UN Technical Joint Working Group, and other joint operational mechanisms, enhance coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination is managed through the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB), a consensual decision-making entity comprised of comprising donors, NGOs and UN agencies - NGO Consortium 	- R/HC	<p><i>Current:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Political Office in Somalia (UNPOS) - RSG is also Head of UNPOS <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Operation in Somalia I and II (UNOSOM) April 1992 - March 1995
Sri Lanka	- RC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) - established in 1997 following an NGO Forum involving donors and local partners. - CHA bodies sponsor the Emergency Group (EG), Northern Task Group (NTG) and the Eastern Forum. 	- RC	
Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - 2 deputy Coordinators - UN Humanitarian Coordination Unit (UNHCU) acts as secretariat for the UN Coordination for Emergency and Relief Operations (UNCERO), the Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for Sudan, and the Humanitarian Aid Forum in Sudan. - UNHCU is the focal point for Government authorities, donors and NGOs. It organises emergency response teams to coordinate the response of UN agencies, NGOs and ICRC. - UNCERO directs Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), forms policy on coordination. - UNICEF is lead agency of OLS. - OCHA deploys personnel to assist UNICEF with OLS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IGAD Partners Forum (IPF) - involves donors. - International NGO Forum established in 1995. - OLS ground rules and members' contractual agreement with the UN 'Consortium Membership Agreement' creates a common framework in which members deal with the state and donors channel funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - UNICEF is lead agency of OLS. 	- Special Envoy of SG for Humanitarian Affairs
Tajikistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - OCHA Field Office covering Tajikistan and N. Afghanistan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R/HC - R/HC is also DSRSG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Tajikistan Office (UNROP) - SRSG is head of UNROP
Turkey	- R/HC		- R/HC	
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RC - OCHA Humanitarian Coordination Unit provides support and capacity to RC and UN Disaster Management Team. 		- RC	
Venezuela	- RC		- RC	

ANNEXE 3: DRC CASE STUDY

1. Context

In November 2000, in its third year of conflict, the DRC was still deeply divided between warring parties. At that time, the number of people displaced by the conflict totalled an estimated 2.1 million. Across the country, the population's coping mechanisms were at their limits, and levels of vulnerability and food insecurity were deteriorating. Such a context presents profound challenges to effective humanitarian response and coordination – especially when infrastructure is absent or decayed, as in this case. This poses profound constraints on movement across the country. Furthermore, the small number of implementing partners spread sparsely across the country and the low levels of donor support for humanitarian action are insufficient to meet the needs of the struggling populations.

There is a fluctuating relationship between levels of funds and access in the DRC – at times, funds for response have eclipsed agencies' ability to access beneficiaries, while at other points it has been the reverse. In the east, security concerns have been the major factor in access; this has been improving. In the west, the limits placed by the government on aid agencies' movements have constrained access. The imposition of a fixed exchange rate has also penalised agencies and, in the west, this and access are cited as the major strategic challenges.

Finally, the faltering Lusaka Peace Accords directly affect the humanitarian response. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has been unable to make headway in its goal to prepare the ground for military observers to monitor compliance with ceasefire obligations. Security constraints restricts movement with the result that personnel deployed so far are unable to fulfil their mandated task and are struggling to engage in constructive activities. The Special Representative of the SRS is finding it difficult both to encourage warring parties to stand by their commitments and to sustain the interest of UN Member States. Donors are unwilling to commit funds to the country.

2. Coordination Structures

The DRC is the size of Western Europe. While it is divided across multiple front lines, humanitarian coordination is able to take place at a number of levels. The team focused on coordination in the capital Kinshasa, and North and South Kivu.

Kinshasa

From the end of 1997 to mid-1998 there was a succession of Resident Representatives a.i. In mid-1998 the Regional Representative of UNHCR was appointed Humanitarian Coordinator and remained so until end 1999. His operational responsibilities as head of agency were given to a deputy. During 1999, an OCHA unit was created with UNDP funding, but by May 2000 this was funded directly by donors.

2.1 Current Structures

- The UN Country Team is headed by a Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. who has been in place since January 2000. He is also the UNICEF representative. He is supported by OCHA in Kinshasa, which has four professional officers and national staff. OCHA is one of the key liaison points with the government authorities in both east and west.
- OCHA convenes weekly meetings on Wednesday afternoons for the UN, NGOs, and the Red Cross. This is the key forum for information exchange in Kinshasa.
- A government 'Crisis Commission', chaired by the Ministry of Health, is called on an ad hoc basis in response to a particular crisis. It involves the UN, NGOs (both local and international), and the Red Cross.
- UN Country Team meetings occur infrequently.
- MONUC convenes Friday morning meetings that NGOs do not attend.
- International NGOs (INGOs) meet on Fridays. This involves five to six INGOs.
- The Red Cross convenes meetings every week between all its international sections, and once a month with the Congolese Red Cross.

North Kivu

In Goma, the history of coordination has gone through several phases. In the early 1990s, local and international NGOs worked together to assist 300,000 people displaced by fighting in the Masisi area. These efforts were eclipsed by the Rwandan refugee influx for which UNHCR had coordination responsibility between 1994 and 1996. With the onset of war in the eastern DRC in 1996, UN agencies withdrew; they were slow to return. As the first UN agency to return, UNICEF was asked by the Humanitarian Coordinator in Kinshasa to assume the coordination role for North Kivu.

2.2 Current Structures

- The Provincial Coordinator from UNICEF is supported by an OCHA staff member.
- OCHA has one Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, two international Humanitarian Affairs Officers, and several national staff. Together with the Provincial Coordinator, this is referred to informally as 'The Coordination.'
- The local authorities have various *Comités Techniques* that convene NGOs to talk with them on a monthly basis. These structures are acknowledged to be more important for protocol than practical implementation.
- The Provincial Coordinator chairs a meeting every Monday for the UN agencies in Goma.
- The UN Security Management Team meets on ad hoc basis.
- UN agencies and local and international NGOs meet on Fridays to discuss information on security and programming. This meeting has a rotating chair.
- The ECHO representative calls NGOs together to discuss health interventions.
- A few INGOs have informal meetings to share analysis that draws on that of experienced Congolese staff.
- Sectoral Coordination: In June 2000 'The Coordination' established five commissions to devise strategies for five sectors. (These have since been wound up, to the dismay of some participants.) Each of the commissions, headed either by a UN agency or an INGO, involved local structures such as *chef de départements*, local NGOs, and the five main religious groups. The participants (120 in all) were asked to define the challenges and solutions to turn into on strategies for each sector.

South Kivu

One of the challenges for coordination is the relationship between international NGOs and an increasingly politicised local civil society. Local groups and activists have been highly critical of MONUC.

2.3 Current Structures

- The Provincial Coordinator from WFP has recently been strengthened by support from an OCHA staff member.
- Local authorities have recently nominated a focal point for contact with agencies. Previously the governor had been the point of contact.
- The Provincial Coordinator convenes a weekly UN Country Team meeting.
- The UN has a weekly meeting with international NGOs and Red Cross agencies.
- Sectoral coordination: The Provincial Coordinator has established commissions to devise strategies for different sectors, each comprised of four to five agencies who nominated a Coordinator. Only UN agencies and international NGOs in Bukavu are involved in the commissions. Unlike the North Kivu commissions, in South Kivu the commissions continue to serve as a focus for sectoral coordination on an ad hoc basis.

Kisangani, Bunia, Kasai, Gbadolite and Kindu

The team were unable to explore in detail coordination experiences in these five locations.

2.4 Current Structures

- OCHA has one OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer who reports on events in each place.
- INGOs have established structures to exchange information or to collaborate with one another in response to the needs of the situation – for example, when an epidemic strikes. In Kisangani, the three INGOs working in health meet regularly to discuss their planned action.
- Agencies in Kisangani interface with a Comité Technique, established by the authorities.
- Every Wednesday a meeting on security is chaired by MONUC. UNICEF also coordinates weekly meetings.

3. Coordination Tools

- The Emergency Humanitarian Initiative fund (EHI) of \$4m was designed as a rapid response trust fund to be managed by an interagency group that gets reports/proposals from OCHA and approves interventions on the basis of agreed criteria. In reality, there has never been a formal meeting of this group. Instead, proposals recommended OCHA are discussed by the UN Country Team members and key donors. To date, proposals have included funding an airlift capacity, and the purchase and provision of emergency supplies.
- Information sharing meetings (as described above).
- Situation reports– in North Kivu, these were described as well presented and timely.
- Analysis papers from OCHA on the situation in particular provinces or pressing humanitarian issues.
- The Consolidated Appeal.

4. Good Practice

- OCHA has ensured that it works with NGOs and the Red Cross Movement, not solely UN agencies, as it has recognised that the NGOs and Red Cross are the key players currently undertaking humanitarian response in the DRC. All INGO interviewees viewed OCHA as their primary interlocutor in the UN and as a key source of support in their negotiations with authorities, in the exchange of information, in international advocacy for funds, and as a source of logistics through the EHI initiative.
- OCHA has played a key role in negotiating access to beneficiaries. This was highly valued by NGOs.
- OCHA staff in both east and west DRC are able to offer sound political, socio-economic and humanitarian needs analysis to inform the actions of the rest of the humanitarian community.
- In Kinshasa and Goma INGOs come together weekly to share analysis of the humanitarian situation and to discuss their possible responses to meet humanitarian need.
- In Kisangani, INGOs have collaborated to coordinate their operations and advocacy strategies to press for more implementing partners to come to the DRC.
- OCHA's advocacy towards the donors for fundraising and to the UN Security Council on the plight of the Banyamulenge are both powerful examples of OCHA's potential to undertake effective humanitarian advocacy
- Many NGOs and UN sought out the advice of OCHA's Senior Humanitarian Adviser before undertaking any interactions with local authorities in the east. This was seen as a key political/diplomatic role, essential of a Coordinator.
- In North Kivu, several NGOs gathered together to do a study on salary scales; the results mean they now have guidance for eastern DRC. NGOs also came together to establish a common position on taxation in the east in order to be able to speak with one voice to the authorities, who were claiming 27 different taxes.
- OCHA has organised training sessions on food security, flood response, presenting information about risks, facts, and preparedness measures to raise standards and ensure more harmonised humanitarian responses.

5. Weaknesses

- One of the most striking features of coordination in DRC were the high levels of competition, tension and mistrust among UN agencies.
- While some UN staff acknowledged the value and dynamism of the role played by OCHA staff, others appeared determined to minimise or restrict OCHA's role and profile in coordination. As a result, OCHA appeared to have a precarious role within the UN Country Team that required constant careful diplomacy to sustain the cooperation of other UN colleagues.
- The inclusion of local NGOs in coordination structures has proved highly contentious in South Kivu where agencies fear that information and analysis shared among the humanitarian community has been used for political purposes by local groups.
- Poor communication within and among organisations across the frontlines has led to diverging perceptions of the situation on either side of the frontline. This had further led to misconceptions in Kinshasa about the degree of access in the east, which has impaired their support and response to colleagues in the east.
- The intense debate about coordination structures in Kinshasa (particularly strong in the run-up to an Inter-Agency Mission to DRC in December 2000) has been at the expense of assessment and support to coordination structures in the provinces.
- There are unclear reporting lines among all staff with coordination responsibilities, and many staff reported a lack of effective briefing and induction. The Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. argued there needed to be greater clarity about responsibilities vis-à-vis the SRSG, OCHA's role, and the responsibilities for agencies leading coordination at sub-national level.
- OCHA's precarious role within the UN Country Team has impaired its ability to play a robust advocacy role towards the SRSG, the Secretary-General, the UN Security Council and other UN Member States who are pushing for greater integration of the UN's political and humanitarian objectives in the DRC.
- While some UN personnel were anxious to support NGOs, others showed little interest in non-UN agencies despite the fact that NGO programmes constitute the majority of the international humanitarian efforts in the DRC. UN personnel and international NGO staff gave examples of how NGOs had been excluded or ignored, or where UN-NGO collaboration was weak despite similarities of mandate or activity. For example, one UN staff member described how some UN Country Team members would walk out of an inter-agency meeting once the INGOs arrived. An NGO interviewee described how a UN operational agency had negotiated with authorities to unblock its lorries, but had not negotiated access for the NGO lorries that were also blocked.
- The lack of a strategic plan, agreed standards for the response and the lack of strategic monitoring for humanitarian action in the DRC. Although Principles of Engagement in DRC were agreed in November 1998, these have not been effectively used.

ANNEXE 4: SOMALIA CASE STUDY

1. Context

Somalia is a prominent example of a chronic conflict that has continued for almost a decade since the onset of factional fighting and the collapse of the government in 1991. Persistent poverty, drought and factional violence cause an estimated 750,000 people to remain vulnerable and food insecure across the country. However, the northern parts of the country have been free of the worst of conflict for last five years.

In 1991 the north west province of Somaliland declared itself independent, later enshrining this in a constitution in 1997 constitution, and although not recognised internationally, its administration seeks to perform governmental functions. In 1998, the neighbouring northeast province declared itself the Puntland State following joint statements from the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) – including the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), the European Commission (EC), the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, UN agencies, donors and NGOs - that it would support peaceful regions and emerging regional administrations as the building blocks for a peaceful, federated state. Unlike Somaliland, Puntland continues to see itself as part of Somalia and has established an administration, although public services are minimal.

In the south, the Transitional National Government (TNG) has been in place since November 2000 as a result of agreement brokered among factions in Djibouti. It has not, however, extended its hold beyond parts of Mogadishu. Neighbouring Ethiopia continues to demonstrate its antipathy to an Islamic state in the south of the country by offering the support to particular factions of Ethiopian troops posted inside Somalia.

The UN's involvement in Somalia cannot be divorced from the legacy of the events during the early 1990s, and a series of ill-fated efforts by peacekeepers to facilitate humanitarian aid. The beginning of the 1990s witnessed a swathe of asset stripping and violence against the population by armed factions, resulting in a descent into violence and an acute famine emergency between 1991 and 1993. This prompted the UN Security Council to deploy peacekeepers to protect the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The initial force – the small, weakly mandated UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) – appeared to fuel protection rackets rather than feed the hungry. It was replaced by the US-led mission of Operation Restore Hope that in turn was replaced by UNSOM II. The October 1993 debacle which involved the deaths of 20 troops – 18 of them American – in retaliation for UNOSOM's pursuit of one warlord for his part in killing 28 Pakistani peacekeepers, prompted the UN to withdraw from Somalia, its credibility in tatters.

Since this debacle, donor fatigue with crisis in Somalia has grown and deepened. Consequently, Somalia has witnessed a steady stream of departing humanitarian agencies as well as the downscaling of operations among those agencies that have remained.

2. Coordination Structures

Nairobi

In Nairobi, coordination coheres around the SACB at various levels. The SACB was founded through the agreement of international agencies that the rehabilitation of the devastated country required stronger donor involvement in coordination. The Addis Ababa declaration of 1 December 1993 envisaged that the SACB would include donors, UN agencies and programmes, NGOs, multilateral and regional institutions and organisations to coordinate on various aspects of international aid to Somalia. The mandate ascribed to SACB was to 'operate until such time as Somalia re-establishes institutional machinery for national development management and aid coordination, and for coordination of development assistance with its international partners.' The EU, Somalia's single largest donor, was given the chair of the SACB. (However, it no longer holds the chair of any of the main SACB committees.) Membership of the SACB is voluntary and today consists of 117 partner agencies. Its enacts its work through a number of committees.

- The **Executive Committee**, now chaired by a representative of the Danish Embassy, meets once monthly as the principal policy approval forum on relief, development and security issues. It operates through consensus 'in which unanimity is not essential'. Although donor membership is unrestricted, it also includes four UN Country Team members selected by the UN Country Team including the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), UNPOS, three (plus or minus one) INGO members selected by INGO Consortium. Additional invitees are allowed in accordance with the agenda.
- The **Steering Committee**, composed of the chairpersons of the SACB sectoral committees, donors, and UN agencies, is chaired by the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. It plays a key role in inter-sectoral coordination and it is mandated to monitor the success of sectoral activities.
- **Sectoral Committees** on health, food security, water and sanitation, education, and a fifth working group on governance chaired by the Italian ambassador, meet monthly. These all meet to discuss and agree action on technical issues. Many of the sectoral committees have further subcommittees working on specific issues, for example, the health committee has the Cholera task force, TB group, HIV/AIDS, measles, nutrition, and a group on hospitals. Current efforts focus on forming strategies for each of these sectors.
- The **Consultative Group** is open to all SACB members and the general public as a monthly forum for update and information exchange. This has been established more recently than the other structures with the aim to involve Somalis in Nairobi in coordination. It is chaired by a representative of the NGO Consortium.
- The **SACB Secretariat** is funded by UNDP and the EC. It organises and minutes meetings, disseminates outcomes and maintains an archive of material.
- The SACB also has a **Main Body Meeting** that is held when necessary to consider impact of major changes on the situation for SACB policy. The last one was held in May 1997 in Rome.
- The **NGO Consortium** consists of an executive committee and a main body involving international and local NGOs who elect representatives to sit on the SACB's committees.
- All members of the UN Country Team participate in the SACB at various levels. However, the UN retains a number of coordination mechanisms and structures.
- The **UN Country Team** meets roughly once a month, as does its Joint Working Group – a sub-group on interagency operations that focuses on the technical or operational issues arising from UN Country Team discussions – and the Security Management Team.
- The **UN Coordination Unit** was established in 1997 as a UNDP project supported by OCHA; it is now also funded by the Swedish government and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Its budget for 2001 is \$1.3m to support a proposed structure for 2001 that expands the office to include five professional and three national staff who service the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and the UN Country Team, and thus the SACB. Its functions include support to the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, information management, data collection, analysis and reporting, and the promotion of common UN strategies.¹³¹

Somalia

In Somalia itself, coordination on the ground is more minimal. In Puntland and Somaliland, coordination structures involve local authorities, including relevant line ministries.

- In **Somaliland**, the UN has a coordination Focal Point in Hargeisa, although the post has been left unfilled for long periods. The NGO Consortium Focal Point plays a role in coordination, while security coordination is led by the UN Zone Security Officer. UNCIEF Regional Programme Officers and UNDP Area Programme Officers are key to coordination.
- In **Puntland**, a UN Focal Point combines roles for coordination and the UNDP's Area Programme Officer, and divides her time between the administrative capital Garowe and the trading capital Bosaso – where UNICEF has its headquarters. As in Somaliland, the NGO Consortium Focal Point plays a role in coordination, while the UN Zone Security Officer leads security coordination.
- In the south, OCHA has recently appointed a Humanitarian Affairs Officer to provide support to coordination in the south and central region based in Baidoa. Hitherto, INGOs and UN agencies had performed ad hoc coordination functions. Efforts to hold monthly meetings of INGOs and UN agencies in south and central Somalia were described as suffering from poor attendance. Elsewhere across the south, coordination is based on the initiative of individuals and agencies in particular areas. A UN Zone Security Officer has also recently been deployed.

¹³¹ However, the United Nations Coordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU) received approximately only a quarter of \$1.3m last year.

3. Coordination Tools

The principal coordination mechanisms for Somalia are:

- Regular meetings at all levels in Nairobi. (Field-level meetings are said to be gradually increasing in regularity and importance.)
- Regular bulletins of information from the Food Security Assessment Unit, Data Management Information Unit, UNCU and the SACB Secretariat.
- Matrixes of agency activities, for example, on governance.
- The Consolidated Appeal
- The SACB Policy Framework for Continuing Cooperation in Somalia (drawn up since the establishment of the TNG to articulate the SACB's impartiality).
- The SACB Operational Framework that attempts to collate sector strategies for all SACB partners.

4. Good Practice

- The SACB has engendered a habit of cooperation through regular interaction. Some of the SACB's agreements attain a level of detail that suggests notable commitment to coordination on paper.
- The full-time Coordinator of the health sectoral committee uses sectoral committees effectively to increase the accountability of participants to agreements made through effective follow up. He focuses on the field through regular travel to the field. As a former NGO worker he has managed to keep NGOs on board effectively. Having worked in Somalia for more than five years, he acts as institutional memory.
- There appears to be less preoccupation with who should coordinate among UN agencies than in other complex emergencies. This relative harmony among UN agencies is variously attributed to the fact that donors are watching closely, and to the role of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in bringing people together.
- The UNCU provides first class analysis to feed into strategy development. (However, the SACB members cannot make effective use of it in a shared strategy because contradictory interests divide them).
- A Humanitarian Analysis Group promotes discussion of the pressing challenges and disseminates succinct findings to others.
- A secretariat function that organises meetings, takes minutes, disseminates and builds an archive of material that is accessible to everyone is highly valued.
- The numerous initiatives to gather and disseminate information mean that a key coordination activity is to coordinate information flows. An 'information officers group' reviews information inflows, though interviewees suggested that duplication remains.
- There is systematic consultation by UNICEF staff in Nairobi of colleagues on the ground on the policies being discussed within the SACB or UN Country Team.
- There are well-coordinated/jointly implemented projects between UNICEF and WFP in Baidoa, for example, UNICEF providing support in the form of medical supplies for healthcare, following WFP food-for-work activities to reconstruct building for the Rabdure women's cooperative.
- A regional exercise to stimulate pastoral networks was found to be hugely beneficial by all participants, and an indication once again of how few problems stay within borders and the imperative of retaining regional analysis and strategy.

5. Weaknesses

- The time and resources invested in the SACB are striking, but it is not clear what the impact is on the ground.
- The lack of systematic field staff consultation processes and limited transmission of information from Nairobi to the field suggests that for some activity in Nairobi has become end in itself. This is clearly a consequence of the lack of presence in Somalia of many organisations due to the security situation and the realities of a 'remote control' cross-border operation. Those NGOs who are able to fly people back and forth, and (the few) UN personnel that travel regularly to the field do act as important go-betweens and increase the potential for the SACB to support the field.
- The weakness of coordination on the ground. A proposal on field coordination simply slipped off the agenda despite having been stressed at the general meeting of the SACB held in Rome.

- The SACB was established to compensate for the lack of central government administration to be the chief interlocutor for the aid effort. Yet the participation of Somalis in efforts to assist Somalia appear minimal. In the field, participation and consultation is a fraught activity involving a generation of many competing claims from local groups. The greater fluidity of the security situation in the south/central region clearly makes this particularly difficult.
- Although there are different views about the extent to which the SACB is a donor coordination group, there is agreement that the donors do not present a united front or even elements of a common strategy. At best, the SACB framework appears to have constrained one or two members from adopting a different direction from that of the other members, for example, in the degree of action to recognise the TNG.
- INGOs have the potential to influence the decisions and conduct of the SACB by virtue of its consensus-based structure, but have been too donor-dependent or poorly organised to marshal an effective counterweight to UN agencies and donors in the SACB at the higher levels
- Participants cite the value of a forum in which people come together and get to know each other, but many interviewees stressed the importance of transparency and honesty, which implies that the quality of the interactions is not satisfactory.
- Although the SACB has the potential to be an effective peer review and accountability mechanism, a lack of outspokenness and activism on the part of the majority of SACB members means that problems or failings are either not raised, confronted or followed up. One result of this is that donors are reported to continue to fund poorly performing agencies.
- Although in Nairobi there are agreements among all actors on rents, salaries and bonuses, these have been poorly disseminated or implemented. Field staff in Baidoa were unaware of such efforts. In a setting where the ready availability of arms invites opportunistic threats from individuals or communities who feel they have lost out in the aid effort, the absence of coordination on matters such as minimum operating standards or staff salaries has security implications.
- There are a plethora of documents and agreements among and between agencies but not one clear strategy for action for the aid effort.
- There has been much debate over the past few years about the appropriate political strategies that the international community should adopt towards Somalia. Should the international community focus on consolidating those areas of stability that emerge (that is, building around the achievements of Somaliland and Puntland to extend authority over Somalia) or on establishing a centralised government for all of Somalia? Yet, since the declaration of the TNG, there has been little discussion inside the SACB structures on this.

ANNEXE 5a: KOSOVO CASE STUDY

1. Context

The Kosovo crisis has consisted of at least four identifiable phases:

- Up to 24 March 1999: the pre-bombing phase with limited IDP and refugee movements;
- 24 March – 13 June 1999: the major refugee exodus and international humanitarian response, particularly in Albania and Macedonia;
- 10 June 1999 – Spring 2000: the refugee return, including the humanitarian response within Kosovo leading up to and going over the winter of 1999/2000; also increased needs within FRY (excluding Kosovo) for IDPs;
- During 2000: a shift from emergency response to rehabilitation, typified by the ending of the UN Interim Administrative Mission (UNMIK) Humanitarian Pillar I in June 2000.

The Kosovo crisis up until the end of 1999 had a high level of political and media profile. The international response was typified by a plethora of agencies, ample - and sometimes too much - funding, and high levels of bilateral action as governments and agencies had to be seen to be active.

From 2000 onwards the focus has been on a shift from emergency response to rehabilitation and reconstruction, with responsibilities being taken over by the UNMIK and fledgling Kosovan departments. UNMIK has been slow to develop capacity to take over responsibilities previously undertaken by the humanitarian agencies.

At time of the case study visit (January 2001), the humanitarian response had been greatly scaled down since 1999. Many of the 'hot' issues which had been of concern during the height of the Kosovo crisis, such as the coordination of an extraordinary number of humanitarian actors and the relationship with, and role of the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR), had subsided.

Key humanitarian issues include the plight of the Serb, Roma and other minorities in Kosovo; winter needs, particularly for the vulnerable still living in temporary accommodation including those whose houses were completely destroyed; the possibility of IDP returns from the rest of FRY; and preparedness for future humanitarian needs arising from instability within and around Kosovo.

2. Coordination Structures

Any discussion about humanitarian coordination in the Kosovo crisis needs to specify which phase is being talked about. (This study does not deal with coordination in Albania and Macedonia which has been well documented in a variety of reviews and evaluations, notably in Suhkre et al 2000 and Telford 2000).

2.1 June 1999 – June 2000:

- UN SC Resolution 1244 enables the establishment of UNMIK, a then unprecedented structure with three non-UN organisations (European Union (EU), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO KFOR) within it and led by the SRSG.¹³² The UNMIK structure consisted of four pillars, each headed by a DSRSG:

Pillar 1: Humanitarian Affairs (led by UNHCR)

Pillar 2: Interim Civil Administration (led by UN)

Pillar 3: Institution Building (led by OSCE)

Pillar 4: Economic Reconstruction (led by the EU)

- Principal DSRSG responsible for overall coordination within UNMIK.
- Inter-Agency Coordination Unit (IACU) is supported by and housed within UNHCR and run by OCHA personnel. Initially, OCHA ran twice daily meetings for the wider humanitarian community, focusing on security issues.

¹³² From June 1999, the Acting SRSG was Sergio Vieira de Mello. Bernard Kouchner was the SRSG from July 1999 until January 2001.

- A Humanitarian Community Information Centre (HCIC), described as an initiative of the DSRSG – HA, opened in August 1999 supported by OCHA, international NGOs, UNHCR and other UN agencies with the objective of promoting and facilitating information exchange among all organisations engaged in emergency and rehabilitation work in Kosovo. Originally staff included a KFOR liaison officer and seconded staff from agencies (including WFP, UNHCR, Catholic Relief Services, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Save the Children, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). With the reduction of humanitarian assistance, since December 2000, HCIC staff comprise OCHA personnel and a manager seconded from Save the Children.
- A UN Development Coordinator appointed in March 2000 to ensure complementarity of efforts and to lay the ground for sustainable development.

2.2 From June 2000

Changes as a result of the ending of UNMIK Pillar I:

- A Humanitarian Coordinator appointed for Kosovo (also UNHCR Special Envoy for FRY) replacing the DSRSG – HA, continuing to attend senior UNMIK and Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS) meetings, including morning Heads of Pillars meetings.
- An OCHA senior humanitarian affairs officer is now head of OCHA office and Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator.
- The OCHA staff and office continue to work in support of the Humanitarian Coordinator, with responsibility for supervision and funding of the HCIC.
- Regional (sub-Pristina) coordination has been increasingly transferred from UNHCR to the UNMIK civil administration at municipal level. UNICEF has also transferred education coordination to UNMIK, but other UN agencies still lead regional coordination.
- Sectoral Coordination: Each sector is normally led by the appropriate UN agency, although NGOs may also have their own coordination meetings, for example, those involved in credit projects. Task or working groups have looked at specific issues such as winterisation and minorities (e.g. the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force on Minorities).
- Pillar IV holds fortnightly meetings for donors to which OCHA brings humanitarian concerns.

3. Coordination Tools

- Inter-agency coordination meetings reflecting IASC composition are held every fortnight. OCHA Community Briefing meetings focus on broad issues, but include regular security briefing.
- The OCHA Field Liaison Unit helps information flow in both directions between Pristina and regional centres, feeding into regional coordination meetings.
- The HCIC provide a range of services including Geographic Information Systems (GIS), maps and the Kosovo Atlas; the CD-ROMs of the Kosovo Encyclopaedia, Housing Reconstruction Guidelines and HCIC Toolbox; HCIC website, hosted by ReliefWeb; a list of coordination meetings, including composition, timing, who convenes etc.
- OCHA Humanitarian Updates produced monthly.
- The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) led by OCHA.
- UNDP/UNDG work on Kosovo Common Assessment, with contributions from OCHA on behalf of the humanitarian agencies.

4. Good Practice

- Identifying gaps: Humanitarian Coordinator/OCHA/HCIC winter preparedness risk analysis survey created awareness among donors and in UNMIK of humanitarian needs for the 2000/01 winter in spite of the lateness of the work.¹³³ Most donors and agencies had little interest in preparing for winter during the European summer.¹³⁴ UNHCR had rapidly shifted out of its winter preparedness role undertaken in 1999/2000. UNMIK was unprepared to take on the planning and coordination role. OCHA therefore convened and chaired winter preparedness meetings attended by UN agencies, UNMIK departments, NGOs and donors. The Humanitarian Coordinator's advocacy role was important.

¹³³ An important initiative, but one which was also criticised for the cumbersome nature of the survey process.

¹³⁴ Although OFDA reported that it was pushing for work on winter preparedness during the summer of 2000.

- FAO provide an example of a well-focused strategy of coordinating and providing technical support to implementing agencies, working closely with donors to avoid duplications and advising on funding levels. They also monitor and evaluate seed programmes. This coordination was described by one INGO as 'exemplary'.
- The Humanitarian Accounting exercise in 2000 was an attempt to put more life into the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP)/CAP process and its mid-term review by asking each agency to report back on achievements and impact against objectives and constraints.¹³⁵ It also identified gaps in the humanitarian effort and assisted coordination of the preparation of CAP 2001.
- The transfer of responsibilities from UN agencies to the UNMIK civil administration structures worked well. For example, WFP is phasing out food distribution and shifting to a 'social case approach' run by the Department for Social Assistance and the Centres for Social Work. FAO is devolving coordination and technical support to the Department of Agriculture.

5. Issues

- How do humanitarian and development agencies function when the UN is the transitional government and the long-term status of Kosovo remains undecided?
- Looking back to the initial phase of the emergency response in Kosovo from June 1999 onwards, interviewees and reports note the calibre and skills of the senior OCHA personnel deployed, providing essential coordination services. However, the team was severely under-resourced in terms of equipment (vehicles, communications equipment, office equipment).¹³⁶
- Major coordination problems in Kosovo have been less to do with inter-humanitarian agency relationships and more to do with the humanitarian community's relationships with the UNMIK structures. If the traditional relief – development gap exists in Kosovo it is partly due to the slowness of UNMIK to take over and Kosova structures to develop and be given responsibility.
- As part of a wider issue of using and building local capacity, efforts to include Kosovans at senior levels in coordination structures have been slow to take effect.
- Uncertainty in some quarters about the appointment and role of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Some interviewees were clear about the Humanitarian Coordinator's role and UNHCR's role, while others were not. One donor said 'We don't differentiate between the Humanitarian Coordinator and UNHCR'. It begs the question of whether UNHCR is the lead agency or not? The Humanitarian Coordinator argued that it is not.
- Lack of clarity on role of head of OCHA office and relationship with the Humanitarian Coordinator (including role as Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator). There were no relevant up to date ToRs for either post.¹³⁷
- The absence of any public document which clearly describes the UN's humanitarian coordination arrangements in Kosovo after the dissolution of Pillar 1.
- OCHA's profile was contentious. During the Pillar 1 phase, it was subsumed within UNHCR office, with no mention of its role in some Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council. The blurred concept of the Humanitarian Pillar (led by UNHCR) within an Integrated UN Mission that was sometimes referred to as the UNHCR pillar. UNHCR was seen by some outside the humanitarian community as the sole humanitarian agency.
- No OCHA staff member was given a proper briefing or induction, all the more important because of the lack of previous OCHA experience. However, one senior staff member has 20 years UN experience and the other has wide Balkan experience.
- Cooperation and liaison between the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and UN Development Coordinator appeared problematic.
- Many interviewees commented on ECHO's poor participation in coordination, due apparently to under-staffing and, in the case of some meetings, instructions from Brussels.
- During the study in Kosovo, the study team member attended three of the more than a dozen regular meetings organised in Pristina by UN agencies and UNMIK. These were poorly conducted, characterised by an absence of introductions, a failure sometimes to check on the language favoured by participants, a failure to prohibit the use of mobile phones etc.
- The domination of coordination meetings by international staff made it difficult for national staff to speak and be heard.

¹³⁵ Unfortunately this exercise did not apparently include any specific review of the effectiveness of coordination.

¹³⁶ Vehicle procurement was reported to have taken five months.

¹³⁷ The deputising role did not include, in practice, standing in for the Humanitarian Coordinator at UNMIK coordination meetings.

- The HCIC initiative has received much praise from UN and non-UN agencies, particularly for its sense of inclusiveness. Having managers with NGO backgrounds probably helped this. However an emphasis on neutrality has sometimes led to confusion over identity and ownership and to unclear relationships with the OCHA office and the Humanitarian Coordinator. HCIC could only collect and disseminate information given to it – therefore it was to an extent ad hoc.
- OCHA's lack of adequate management support to the HCIC resulted in staff uncertainties, gaps in staff replacements and a subsequent interruption of services. By January 2001, some of HCIC's information was in urgent need of updating. Its future after the transition, i.e. under whose umbrella it should sit, was also still unclear. It is important to learn the lessons of the HCIC by having an independent evaluation.
- Duplication of GIS and other databases.¹³⁸
- The sheer number of agencies working in Kosovo presented challenges for coordination. There was little or no considered assessment or study of the scale and impact of this problem. In most emergencies, the key issue will remain the effective coordination of the major UN humanitarian agencies, the Red Cross / Red Crescent family and probably not more than 20 – 30 major INGOs. The problem of a large number of additional small NGOs needs to be anticipated and dealt with in the coordination of large-scale high-profile emergencies.
- INGOs did not feel they were seen as full partners with UN agencies, rather implementers. They were asked to contribute to CAP discussion at very late stage. On the other hand, the INGO Council could probably be more effective. ICVA has failed to replace the NGO Liaison Officer post within HCIC.
- In spite of Civil-Military Cooperation Commission (CIMIC) initiatives and KFOR representative in the HCIC, agencies have found coordination with NATO forces problematic. Information flow tends to be one way – to the military. 'I get information out of KFOR in spite of the system'. The national KFOR units each have their own characteristics and approaches, and many do not see the need to coordinate their humanitarian actions with the agencies. 'They do what they think is good in the morning'. An added problem is the lack of institutional memory within national units as they often rotate completely every three to six months.
- International political pressure to encourage return of Serb IDPs from FRY is a matter of deep concern to some humanitarian agencies.
- Lack of coordination and cooperation within the broad ambit of civil society. There is little contact between the INGO and Kosovar NGO groupings. OSCE has established 10 NGO resource centres apparently with little liaison with the INGOs. (Relief and development are seen as separate activities.)
- There has been little work on standards or principles or gender within the humanitarian community (although CAP 2001 has focus on women). These could have been areas of work for the HCIC.
- Lack of institutional memory – no single place where evaluations and reviews can be accessed.
- As the political and media profile of the Kosovo crisis has decreased, so has the evaluative and reflective work of the humanitarian community. Very little appears to have been written about humanitarian coordination in Kosovo for the period from January 2000 onwards, the humanitarian pillar within UNMIK, its dissolution in June 2000 and the interaction between the humanitarian community and the rest of the international protectorate structures and KFOR.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Noted in the mission report of the ERC a.i. of 9 June 2000.

¹³⁹ For example there appear to be no substantial reviews or evaluations of the major 1999/2000 winterisation response or the overall functioning and effectiveness of UNMIK.

ANNEX 5b: FRY CASE STUDY (EXCLUDING KOSOVO)

1. Context

The humanitarian focus in FRY, excluding Kosovo, has been on the Serb and Roma IDPs from Kosovo, the overall deterioration in living conditions within FRY over recent years, exacerbated by the NATO bombing campaign and sanctions and the continuing caseload of refugees from earlier conflicts.

Humanitarian agencies operating in FRY have had to keep their distance from both the federal and Serbian authorities until October 2000. The operating context for INGOs has been very difficult, given no legal status and staff at times suffering harassment. There has not been a flood of agencies into FRY since the fall of the Milosevic government. The small number of agencies relative to Kosovo has made coordination less of a challenge in Belgrade.

2. Coordination Structures

- Humanitarian Coordinator for FRY (excluding Kosovo), Resident Coordinator a.i. and UNICEF Special Representative for FRY (including Kosovo).
- OCHA office headed by Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer who is also Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for FRY, excluding Kosovo.
- UN Liaison Office providing the UN's political representation.
- Humanitarian aid coordination forum for donors/diplomats, attended by Humanitarian Coordinators and UN agencies.
- Sectoral coordination meetings led by the relevant UN agencies.

3. Coordination Tools

- Weekly Heads of Agencies coordination meetings chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator, service by OCHA with an IASC membership (NGOs represented by ICVA) and including the Head of the UN Liaison Office. *'The Heads of Agencies meeting works well – exactly as it should be'* (Head of agency)
- OCHA Weekly Situation Reports.
- OCHA Humanitarian Risk Analysis reports, produced in conjunction with the UN and other agencies.
- Overviews of UN Humanitarian Activities.
- OCHA Podgorica produced surveys including one a household income and expenditure survey.
- OCHA in both Belgrade and Podgorica producing humanitarian operations databases.
- The CAP led by OCHA.
- The ICVA Directory of Humanitarian and Development Agencies in FRY (June 2000).

4. Good Practice

- Humanitarian Coordinator's role is clearly delineated from UNICEF's operation in Serbia and Montenegro. UNICEF is not seen as a lead agency.
- OCHA's Humanitarian Risk Analysis reports are much appreciated.
- OCHA's work on the energy situation in FRY is seen as an important area not being covered by other agencies.
- Handover of the OCHA sub-office in Podgorica to the UNDP liaison office in February 2001 following the signing of a joint Memoranda of Understanding (MoU).
- The integrity and effectiveness of the Yugoslav Red Cross has been a major issue, about which the agencies have collaborated constructively.
- Good collaboration over monitoring the sensitive situation in Southern Serbia and mounting an inter-agency assessment mission in February 2001.

5. Issues

- ICVA has played an important role and represents NGOs at fortnightly heads of agencies meeting, but there is some concern about the flow of information to and from those meetings to the NGOs.
- Some interviewees, particularly from INGOs, felt that OCHA could have made more use of the data and information which it has collected and were sometimes unaware of how the information has been used.
- The transition from a mainly humanitarian response to one of reconstruction facilitated by moves such as the OCHA field office coordination responsibilities being handed over to UNDP and the UNDP officer in charge in Belgrade leading an inter-agency assessment mission to Presovo in Southern Serbia in February 2001.

6. Regional Issues

- This study was not able to make a full assessment of regional coordination in South East Europe. In relation to Kosovo there appeared to be considerable “cross-border” coordination over the sensitive Presovo region in south east Serbia, particularly between the Humanitarian Coordinators in Pristina and Belgrade. The fact that both Humanitarian Coordinators have regional envoy roles within their respective organisations has fostered regional perspectives. However, it was not clear whether there were adequate international coordination structures in place in order to build and maintain a comprehensive regional analysis. At least one senior official in the region was scathing about the absence of such regional mechanisms.
- Different definition of regions in each organisation.
- Tension between the political pressure to encourage the return of Serbs to Kosovo in order to demonstrate the existence of a multi-ethnic international protectorate and the humanitarian space needed to provide effective protection for them.
- The CAP for South Eastern Europe is said to provide the only formal instrument that brings agencies together on a regional basis.
- There have been few studies and evaluations of the Kosovo crisis that have taken a comprehensive regional (Balkan) perspective including the whole of FRY, so there is little written about the nature of regional humanitarian coordination.

ANNEXE 6: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

➤ NEW YORK

UN

Agnes Asekenye-Oonyu, Chief, Africa Section, OCHA
Omar Bakhet, Director, Emergency Response Division, UNDP
Martin Barber, Director a.i., Policy Development and Advocacy Branch, OCHA
Dominique Burgeon, Operations Officer, TCOR, Field Operations Division, FAO
Margaret Carey, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations
Robert Carr, Project Officer, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
Lance Clark, Policy, Advocacy and Information Department, OCHA
Chris Coleman, Chief, Policy and Analysis Unit, DPKO
Kelly David Toweh, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
Shamsul Farooq, Chief, Humanitarian Response, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
Bradley Foerster, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, IASC/ECHA Secretariat, OCHA
Dr. Kingsley Gee, Senior Advisor on Health Policy, WHO
Steve Gleason, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
David Hannah, DPKO
Peter Hornsby, Logistics Officer, DPKO
Nils Kastberg, Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
Kevin Kennedy, Chief, Emergency Liaison Branch, OCHA
Rashid Khalikov, Officer-in-Charge, IASC Secretariat, OCHA
Dr. Atul Khare, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations
Phylis Lee, Chief, Advocacy and External Relations, OCHA
Iain Levine, Chief, Humanitarian Policy Development, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
Alexandre Matsouka, Political Affairs Officer, UN DPA
Marta Maura, Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary-General
Carolyn McAskie, Emergency Relief Coordinator a.i., OCHA
Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Emergency Liaison Branch, OCHA
David McLachlan-Karr, Chief a.i., Asia/Europe/Latin America Section, Emergency Liaison Branch, OCHA
Yohannes Mengesha, Principal Officer, Office of the Deputy Secretary-General
Michael Møller, Principal Officer, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs
Mr. Mochida, Desk Officer for Somalia, UN DPA
Hawaa El-Tayeb Musa, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, DPKO
Robert Piper, Deputy Director, Emergency Response Division, UNDP
Ramesh Rajasingham, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Policy, Advocacy and Information Division, OCHA
Yasser Sabra, Desk Officer for DRC, UN DPA
Emma Shitaka, DPKO (Kosovo)
Michael Smith, UNDP
Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
Peter Swarbrick, DPKO
Ed Tsui, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator a.i., OCHA
Geoff Wiffin, Project Officer, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF

➤ GENEVA

UN

William Barriga, Emergency Officer, Emergency and Post-Conflict Division, IOM
David Bassiouni, Coordinator, IASC/ECHA Secretariat, OCHA
Joel Boutroue, OCHA
Peter de Clerq, Head of Desk, Great Lakes Operation, UNHCR
Thierry Delbreuve, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Complex Emergency Response Branch, OCHA
Steven Gleason, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Emergency Liaison Branch, OCHA
David Harland, OCHA
Merete Johansson, Chief of Section 3, Complex Emergency Response Branch, OCHA
Arjun Katoch, Chief, Field Coordination Support Unit, Disaster Response Branch, OCHA
Brian Keane, Head of Georgia Office, OCHA
Pirkko Kourula, Head, Secretariat Service and Inter-Organization Affairs, UNHCR

Jeff Labovitz, Emergency Response Officer, Emergency and Post-Conflict Division, IOM
Xavier Leus, Director EHA, WHO
Pablo Mateu, Senior Inter-Organization Officer, UNHCR
Dennis McNamara, Special Coordinator for IDPs
Ross Mountain, Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA
Soren Jensen Peterson, UNHCR
Marco Roggia, Senior External Relations Officer, New York Desk, UNHCR
Stephen Tull, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Complex Emergency Response Branch, OCHA
Catherine Walker, Head of Desk for East Asia and the Pacific, UNHCR
Neill Wright, Head of Desk, Kosovo; Deputy Coordinator for SE Europe Operation, UNHCR
Kyaw Hla Zin, Head of Desk, Somalia, UNHCR

Red Cross Movement

Francis Amar, Head, International Organisations Division, ICRC
Jean Ayoub, Under Secretary-General a.i., Disaster Response and Operations Coordination, IFRC
Penny Elghady, Desk Officer for Central Southern Europe, IFRC Geneva
Josse M. Gillijns, Desk Officer, Africa Department, IFRC
Andrée Houk, IFRC
Umesh Palwankar, Diplomatic Adviser, International Organizations Division, ICRC
Rune Skinnerbach, Monitoring and Evaluation, ICRC

NGOs

Martin Griffiths, Director, Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Andrew Marshall, Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Ed Schenkenberg, Coordinator, ICVA

OCHA Field Offices

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Antonio Donini, Director, UN OCHA Afghanistan
Lise Grande, OCHA, Angola
Oliver Lacey Hall, OCHA, DPRK
Dennis Hastert, OCHA, Sierra Leone
Michael Jones, OCHA, Uganda
Brian Keane, OCHA, Georgia
Sikander Khan, OCHA, Sudan
Toby Lanzer, Head of Moscow Office, OCHA
Marie Spaak, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA

➤ ROME

UN

Anne Bauer, Chief, TCOR, Field Operations Division, Technical Cooperation Department, FAO
Manuel Aranda da Silva, Regional Director of the Africa Bureau, WFP
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Agnès Dhur, TCOR, Field Operations Division, FAO
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Jean-Jacques Graisse, Assistant Executive Director, Operations Department, WFP
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Cynthia Jones, Logistics Officer, ALITE Logistics Service, WFP
Sarah Longford, Policy Analyst, Strategy and Policy Division, WFP
Tesema Negash, Deputy Director, Africa Region, WFP
Kenro Oshidari (by email), Regional Manager of East and Southeast Asia, WFP
Marian Read, Senior Monitoring Officer, Office of Evaluation, WFP
Imran Riza, Chief, Interagency Affairs Branch, Resources and External Relations Division, WFP
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Carlo Scaramella, Senior Programme Adviser, WFP
Peter Scott-Bowden, Emergency Officer, ALITE Logistics Service, WFP
Francesco Strippoli, Senior Humanitarian Adviser, Operations Department, WFP
Laurent Thomas, Senior Operations Officer, TCOR, Field Operations Division, FAO

➤ **WASHINGTON DC**

Government

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Peter Smith, Director, Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs, National Security Council
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NGOs

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➤ **BRUSSELS**

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➤ **STOCKHOLM**

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NGOs

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Donors

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➤ **LONDON**

Government

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➤ **OXFORD**

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➤ **DRC**

Government

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UN

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Martin Mogwanja, UNICEF Representative and HC a.i. DRC

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➤ PRISTINA

UN

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Paul Hebert, Head of Office, OCHA, Belgrade
Erkki Heinonen, Representative, UNHCR, Belgrade
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➤ **SOMALIA**

UN

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Kirstie Sinervo, MSF, Hordur
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➤ **NAIROBI**

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Nigel Nicholson, Programme Director, Somalia/Kenya Region, SCF UK
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Henrik Jespersen, First Secretary (Development), Royal Danish Embassy, Nairobi
Christoph Langenkamp, TA Rural Development, EU
Ambassador Francesco Sciortino, Italian Embassy

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