

## Good Humanitarian Donorship: overcoming obstacles to improved collective donor performance

Sue Graves and Victoria Wheeler, HPG

### Key messages

- Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) represents an important collective policy initiative by donors to improve the quality of their contributions to the humanitarian system.
- For GHD's potential to be realised, its high-level commitments need to be translated into practice. However, obstacles to making GHD an operational reality persist.
- Clear indicators are needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of donors, increase the accountability of individual donors and make GHD more tangible for all stakeholders.
- A collective performance framework in line with the full range of GHD principles should be agreed between donors. Such a framework will provide direction for systematic improvements in performance among the majority of official humanitarian donors, and enable more valuable assessments of progress in implementing GHD.
- Operational agencies and humanitarian policy advocates need to engage more actively and collectively with the GHD initiative to enhance implementation by donors, and to take full advantage of the opportunity GHD presents. Agencies should advocate for improved donor behaviour against the broad range of GHD principles.

This paper was produced with the help of expert advice on evaluation techniques from Emery Brusset of Channel Research, and background research by Jonathan Pickering, a Research Associate at ODI. Thanks too to Barnaby Willits-King, Peter Wiles and others who provided substantial peer review comments. And, as always, thanks to our editor, Matthew Foley.

#### Overseas Development Institute

111 Westminster Bridge Road  
London SE1 7JD  
United Kingdom

Tel. +44 (0) 20 7922 0300  
Fax. +44 (0) 20 7922 0399

E-mail: [hpg@odi.org.uk](mailto:hpg@odi.org.uk)  
Websites: [www.odi.org.uk/hpg](http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg)  
and [www.odihpn.org](http://www.odihpn.org)



# Section 1

## Introduction

**T**he Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative represents a unique opportunity to improve the quality of donors' contributions to the humanitarian system. Donors play a crucial role in humanitarian action – as partners, funders, policy-setters and political advocates. Influencing how donors behave has powerful multiplication effects on the performance of the humanitarian system as a whole. By agreeing a definition for humanitarian action, and a set of principles to inform it, donors that have committed to GHD took a bold step towards delimiting their role within the humanitarian system. These donors account for the majority of financing through the humanitarian system and, if they chose, could represent a significant political voice to argue for humanitarian imperatives to protect and assist crisis-affected populations. If effectively implemented, the initiative has the potential to radically change the operational face of humanitarian action, and significantly enhance the quality of official humanitarian aid.

Changing performance in any part of the humanitarian system requires concerted political engagement from its constituent parts. This in turn requires clear goals and strategies for implementation, both from donors and from the implementing agencies that are affected by their actions. It also calls for a clear idea of what success and progress would look like in practice, and the creation of incentives to implement reforms. A number of factors and forces are involved in translating high-level commitments into changed behaviour. These operate at the political, institutional and individual level. Political incentives can come from national or collective processes. At the national level, top-down pressure can be applied by ministers. Bottom-up pressure can come from national advocacy groups and partners demanding improved performance and public accountability. Collectively, changes in performance can be influenced through consensus-building amongst donors (for example through the GHD forum), or through peer review processes like the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s review mechanism. Institutionally, enabling factors include the development of clear guidelines, allowing for flexible decision-making and a clear delineation of responsibilities, and promoting monitoring and evaluation systems that require staff to report against appropriate targets. At the individual level, moral codes, financial and promotional rewards and organisational support influence professional behaviour.

In relation to GHD, activity in all these areas has been varied, both by donors and by the agencies they fund. For their part, donors have endorsed GHD at high political levels, have sought to build

consensus around agreed best practice and have tested innovative financing approaches.<sup>1</sup> A number of donors have published implementation strategies and renewed or revised their humanitarian policy statements.<sup>2</sup> Donors have also agreed performance measures against some aspects of the GHD commitments. Progress has been made in implementing elements of GHD in some contexts. But implementation efforts have not been significant or systematic enough to stimulate generalised changes in donor behaviour.

A number of recent assessments reflect this piecemeal progress. While the flexibility and transparency of funding in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami was better than in other crises, adherence to other GHD principles was far worse, with politics and funding, rather than assessments and needs, driving allocations and programming. As the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition report concludes: 'donors failed to live up to many of their own donor principles' (Telford et al., 2006: 95). Similarly, the joint evaluation of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2005 represents a positive step forward in collaborative donor approaches to learning and accountability. However, the evaluation highlighted challenges facing donors in meeting their commitments to the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian action in such politicised contexts. It also raised concerns regarding the degree to which the GHD principles had been effectively applied in relation to the geographical bias in the distribution of assistance and the military's involvement in aid provision (Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2005).

With a few notable exceptions, implementing agencies and other civil society actors have also not used the GHD framework as effectively as they might to advocate for change. When interviewed, several implementing agency representatives mentioned that GHD 'just didn't seem tangible' to them. In other words, there is little concept of what GHD might produce in terms of changed donor behaviour – in funding, contractual reforms or changed policies. Engagement with donors has struggled to move beyond a focus on funding. Funding issues, while fundamentally important, represent only one part of what GHD could mean in its totality. Policy recommendations for, and institutional engagement on, the more comprehensive range of commitments explicit in the GHD

<sup>1</sup> For example, the governments of Belgium, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK are trialling the use of common or pooled funds in the DRC and Sudan. These funds are currently the subject of a monitoring and evaluation study.

<sup>2</sup> Individual donors' progress in implementing GHD has been the subject of previous reviews and reports. See: DAC Peer Review reports at [http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en\\_2649\\_34603\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_34603_1_1_1_1_1,00.html); Willitts-King (2004); Harmer et al. (2004) and Harmer and Stoddard (2005).

### Box 1: Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD): basic information

The Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative comprises a set of objectives, definitions and general principles for humanitarian action. It was agreed by a group of donors meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2003. Its provisions are as follows:

#### Objectives and definition of humanitarian action

1. The objectives of humanitarian action are to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.
2. Humanitarian action should be guided by the humanitarian principles of *humanity*, meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found; *impartiality*, meaning the implementation of actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations; *neutrality*, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out; and *independence*, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.
3. Humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities, and the provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance, undertaken for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal lives and livelihoods.

#### General principles

4. Respect and promote the implementation of international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights.

5. While reaffirming the primary responsibility of states for the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, strive to ensure flexible and timely funding, on the basis of the collective obligation of striving to meet humanitarian needs.
6. Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments.
7. Request implementing humanitarian organisations to ensure, to the greatest possible extent, adequate involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response.
8. Strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and coordinate effectively with humanitarian partners.
9. Provide humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities.
10. Support and promote the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and coordination of international humanitarian action, the special role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the vital role of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organisations in implementing humanitarian action.

Representatives from 22 donor governments, and the European Commission, now participate in the GHD forum, and the DAC has also endorsed the GHD principles. A range of good practice has also been articulated within the scope of these principles and definitions. See <http://www.goodhumanitarian.org> for further background information.

initiative could produce much greater results. For instance, where access to populations in need is restricted by local opposition, evidence shows that, when coordinated diplomatic pressure is applied and access is jointly prioritised by the international community, restrictions ease more readily than when the international community is divided by national interest (UK House of Commons, 2005; Pantuliano and O'Callaghan, forthcoming). Darfur is just one example where commonly prioritised strategies could provide more effective aid and protection than has so far been achieved.

There are a number of obstacles to effectively translating high-level commitments into broader changes in behaviour. Setting indicators in line with the principles and standards contained in the GHD initiative could clarify roles and responsibilities, increase learning, improve performance and enhance accountability. Drawing on lessons learned from the aid effectiveness agenda, as well as recent HPG research, this paper argues that a comprehensive approach to measuring performance is needed – an approach that takes into account both collective and individual performance and accountability requirements.

### Understanding individual and collective performance

For GHD to have greatest effect, donors need to apply its principles collectively. This does not mean that all donors should apply the principles in the same way – indeed, many will simply be unable to cover the full range of possible areas of action on a global scale. GHD, as a collective endeavour, should be understood as more than the sum of its constituent parts. This means that the performance of individual donors needs to be understood not only in relation to those donors' own commitments and legislative requirements, but also in relation to their contribution to the performance of the whole group. In this light, donor agencies may need to subordinate their own activities and outputs to a commitment towards joint outcomes and results. In order to do this, clarity on collective objectives is required. From this can flow an informed and constructive dialogue on comparative advantages between donors, as well as clearer accountability systems, policies and guidelines.

This paper explores current obstacles to translating GHD commitments into widespread and mainstreamed behavioural change among donors. It draws heavily on lessons from donor efforts to implement the Rome and Paris declarations on aid effectiveness. The relevance of this experience is discussed in Section 2. Drawing on these lessons, Section 3 considers the extent to which efforts to provide guidance and measure performance through the GHD initiative have succeeded in overcoming common obstacles to implementation. The remainder of the paper outlines an enhanced performance measurement framework designed to assist in clarifying responsibilities and roles, strengthening guidance for donor staff and enhancing monitoring and evaluation. Section 4 introduces the performance framework, and Section 5 outlines how it could best be used. Finally, recommendations are made for donors and humanitarian agencies to strengthen and improve overall engagement with GHD.

## Section 2

### Translating high-level commitments into changed behaviour: lessons from the aid effectiveness agenda

In recent years, donors and partner governments have increasingly emphasised working better together to improve aid effectiveness. This trend has been driven by a growing awareness of the negative impact of fragmented donor practices in countries under strain, and increased pressure on governments domestically to demonstrate results. A number of recent international agreements and

### Box 2: Aid effectiveness: high-level commitments

**Monterrey Consensus (March 2002):** called for developed countries to provide more and better aid, as well as improved trade and debt policies.

**Rome Declaration (February 2003):** donors committed themselves to aligning development assistance with partner government strategies. They also undertook to improve systems, harmonise policies and procedures and implement principles of good practice in development cooperation.

**Marrakech (February 2004):** heads of the multilateral development banks and the Chairman of the DAC affirmed their commitment to fostering a global partnership on 'managing for results'.

**Paris Declaration (March 2005):** ministers of developed and developing countries responsible for promoting development, and heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions, signed an international agreement that reaffirmed the commitments of the Rome Declaration and resolved to take far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the delivery and management of aid.

Adapted from OECD/World Bank, 2005; OECD/DAC, 2005.

declarations focus on harmonisation, alignment and results (see Box 2).

There are a number of similarities between the Rome Declaration and GHD, in substance and in process. Both the Rome Declaration and GHD:

- are sets of high-level, aspirational commitments involving official donors;
- are voluntary, multi-donor initiatives;
- include both principles and good practices;
- require internal institutional changes within donors at headquarters and in the field; and
- rely on improved collective behaviour to fulfil their potential.

The experience of implementing the Rome Declaration, and the improvements to the process sought from the subsequent Paris Declaration of March 2005, hold important lessons for GHD at its current stage. In particular, the Rome and Paris experience highlights that difficulties in translating high-level commitments into changed behaviour are not unique to GHD. While the challenges confronting donors seeking to implement the Rome Declaration are wide-ranging, many of them relate to changing individual donor behaviour to facilitate collective action. This corresponds to the challenges of operationalising GHD commitments.

### Box 3: Factors working for and against implementation of the Rome Declaration at the institutional level

- The degree to which monitoring and evaluation systems required staff to report on harmonisation efforts and develop ways of assessing their effectiveness.
- The degree to which policies and guidelines gave staff clear directions and guidance on why, when and how to engage in harmonisation efforts.
- Organisational structure, which determined where responsibility for harmonisation lay and the extent to which country offices could act autonomously and shape their programmes according to local priorities and systems.
- Operational procedures through which aid was delivered (programme design and evaluation, financial management, procurement etc.), and the degree of flexibility in adopting common arrangements with other agencies or partner governments.

Source: de Renzio et al., 2005: 8.

Two years after the endorsement of the Rome Declaration, there was a strong view that its commitments had not been translated into significant changes on the ground. This led to a study to analyse the different factors and forces working for and against harmonisation efforts at the political, institutional and individual levels. The study also considered how these factors shaped incentives for changed behaviour (de Renzio et al., 2005: v).<sup>3</sup>

Lack of progress against several of these factors was found to have hampered implementation of the Rome Declaration. Drawing on this study, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank recommended to the Paris High Level Forum that effort should be directed towards ‘high-value’ operational goals, which should then be translated into operational commitments, with indicators to measure progress (OECD/World Bank, 2005: 14). This approach underpins the Paris Declaration, which established a set of indicators and targets to be reached by 2010.<sup>4</sup> The indicators are collective and quantitative, and are endorsed by donors and partner governments. While some relate to donor

<sup>3</sup> The study included case studies of four bilateral donors (Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and the UK) and two multilateral agencies (the World Bank and the EC). Interviews were conducted with key staff in each agency, including senior managers, staff in charge of human resources and financial management, regional departments and country desks and units responsible for harmonisation. Telephone interviews were conducted with field staff.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>.

behaviour, others are relevant to the behaviour of developing country governments. In this way, the Paris Declaration has moved the aid effectiveness agenda beyond a set of general, aspirational principles, and has laid down practical, operational and monitorable steps to improve aid quality (OECD, 2005: 50).

The indicators provide clarity on what needs to be done by both donors and partner governments to implement their commitments to improve the effectiveness of aid. They also represent an undertaking by donors and developing countries to regularly measure their collective performance, and require tangible institutional changes within donor governments. By establishing a clear agenda and strengthened mechanisms for accountability, the Paris Declaration creates some very powerful incentives for change (OECD, 2005: 54).

This is not to say that the Paris Declaration is perfect. All efforts to make commitments more specific are likely to be difficult. Consensus and buy-in need to be established, indicators need to be contextually appropriate, and perverse incentives must be avoided. While the Paris Declaration has achieved significant consensus, debate continues on the appropriateness (and interpretation) of a number of the indicators. The practical and technical challenges in measuring the progress of such a major initiative are also significant, and it is clear that what gets measured drives priorities for action. For all that, however, the Paris Declaration is a significant step forward.<sup>5</sup> It commits signatories to specific reforms, and to periodic assessments against those commitments. A baseline survey conducted during 2006 across 26 countries will reflect on the collective effect of the Paris Declaration, as well as individual performance in relation to its collective goals. Early indications are that this combined focus on collective performance, individual donor responsibilities and implementation monitoring has raised awareness and improved understanding of what these commitments mean in practice. It also seems to have spurred donors into action, and encouraged institutional change in favour of improved aid effectiveness goals (OECD, forthcoming).

There are lessons in this process for GHD, particularly in the steps taken between the Rome and Paris declarations to translate aspirational commitments into a framework to guide concrete action – a framework which was collectively agreed, and then tied to institutional incentives. Collective initiatives such as the Rome and Paris declarations and GHD offer significant potential to improve the quality of aid. The international system, its political pressures, economic opportunities and norms, can all stimulate internal

<sup>5</sup> The Paris Declaration has been endorsed by over 100 countries, as well as 26 international organisations and 14 civil society organisations.

#### Box 4: Implementing the Red Cross Code: lessons from the independent sector

Efforts to apply the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* to measure the performance of NGOs has relevance to this discussion of GHD. The Red Cross Code is a set of principle-based commitments; it does not prescribe concrete institutional actions for implementation, and as such it is difficult to evaluate performance against it. The Code has, however, been used to guide evaluations of the collective performance of member agencies of the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in the UK, and evaluation teams that have adopted this approach have found that the Code can be used to measure quality in evaluations and strengthen accountability. It has also been recommended that the DEC develop indicators for compliance with the Code (Vaux et al., 2001).<sup>6</sup> This view is supported by a survey and conference on the use of the Code, which found that, while its 'cautious language makes the code comprehensive and appropriate as an instrument for discussing policy and operational matters and dilemmas', it also made the Code 'less useful for NGOs seeking guidance vis-à-vis their actions and for purposes of accountability' (Hilhorst, 2005: 364).

change in individual donor organisations, and strengthen incentives to improve performance (de Renzio et al., 2005). However, systems to measure the performance of a collective are largely nascent, weak or non-existent. This is particularly the case in the humanitarian sector, which has lacked the established policy apparatus seen in the development community. Instead, the sector has relied on the web of obligations arising from a range of agreements between different actors, and an appeal to a sense of common purpose and collective responsibility (HPG, 2005: 7).

The diffuse nature of responsibilities and obligations in the humanitarian field clearly makes it more difficult to promote improved collective performance, including setting and monitoring standards of behaviour. However, this also underscores the importance of the GHD initiative, its attempt to set standards and the need to ensure that the opportunities it offers are fully realised.

Translating high-level commitments into practical changes in behaviour poses challenges for operational agencies and donors in both the development and humanitarian sectors. An analysis of the factors enabling and constraining implementation is essential in order to plan and

<sup>6</sup> The DEC has developed an assessment instrument comprising 28 questions to measure performance against the Red Cross Code of Conduct.

prioritise both individual and collective action. In some instances, obstacles to implementation (such as a lack of monitoring and evaluation systems, guidelines and flexibility, as outlined in Box 3) can act as obstacles and disincentives to implementation at the institutional and individual levels, and can reduce motivation to adopt new behaviour. Drawing on the lessons outlined above, the following section identifies some of these inhibiting factors in relation to GHD.

## Section 3

### Institutional factors affecting the collective implementation of GHD

The findings outlined in the previous section indicate that a number of factors can make it difficult to translate high-level commitments into changes in behaviour. Political context can clearly influence priorities, and institutional factors can exert both a positive and a negative influence. A number of donors have made progress at the institutional level, and there have been some collective initiatives aimed at operationalising GHD principles. This paper focuses primarily on efforts to guide or measure implementation of the GHD principles. These include pilots in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) during 2004 and 2005, to apply the GHD principles in the field; the development of collective indicators for funding and coordination; and draft guidance on GHD for field staff at the country level. Overall, we find that progress has been insufficient or patchy. This section looks in particular at three areas: monitoring and evaluation, policy guidance and locus of responsibility and procedural flexibility.

#### Assessing effectiveness: monitoring and evaluation systems

Lessons from initiatives under the aid effectiveness agenda show that the degree to which staff can assess their effectiveness, and the existence of appropriate accountability mechanisms, influences the motivation for changed behaviour at the political, institutional and individual level. This requires indicators of good performance which can be monitored. There have been two primary efforts to develop collective indicators under the GHD banner – the development of 'impact' indicators as part of the DRC country pilot, and agreement to a set of global collective indicators.

*GHD country pilots – the DRC 'impact' indicators*  
The Stockholm meeting in 2003 set out an implementation plan in addition to the definitions, principles and good practices of GHD. The first point of this plan was for donors to identify at least one crisis subject to a Consolidated Appeal (CAP)

to which the principles and good practices would be applied. In the event, two countries were identified (Burundi and the DRC).<sup>7</sup> Here, we focus on the DRC pilot because it included the development of a set of performance indicators for the trial.

The pilot in the DRC constitutes the most comprehensive effort to date to develop collective indicators of performance to enable effective monitoring and evaluation. However, the indicators, in attempting to measure impact, relate to a wide range of different actors and are not clearly linked to the concrete goals or objectives expressed in the GHD principles (Kinkela et al., 2004: 40). In addition, despite initial intentions, the pilot process became dominated by the CAP/CHAP process (Harmer et al., 2004).

There is clearly a critical need for improved impact measurement in the humanitarian sector in order to better understand the positive and negative effects of humanitarian aid, and to improve future responses and approaches. There is also a clear need for improvements in the CAP and CHAP process, and in information gathering to facilitate learning. However, there is an opportunity cost of conflating such efforts with attempts to measure the application of GHD principles. The technical challenges of measuring impact are widely recognised.<sup>8</sup> But even if these challenges can be

<sup>7</sup> See Harmer et al. (2004) for further background information: [http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/papers/HPG\\_brief18.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/papers/HPG_brief18.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> For discussions of impact measurement see Hofmann et al. (2004); Roche (1999); and DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2000).

overcome, attributing impact to a particular intervention or actor is extremely difficult given the large number of players within the humanitarian system, and the fact that a number of non-aid factors can also contribute to people's survival. The emphasis on the CAP and CHAP in the country pilots, and the concentration on the impact level, moved the focus of indicator development and performance measurement away from donors. The indicators provide no clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different actors, and performance against the indicators cannot be easily attributed. Interviewees for this study identified this lack of clarity as one of the fundamental weaknesses of the DRC pilot and the impact indicators. Performance against the indicators (if measurable) is determined by the actions and decisions of a wide range of actors. For a number of the DRC indicators, therefore, performance information cannot be applied to measure donors' progress in implementing or applying GHD principles or practices, nor can it be used to encourage changes in donors' behaviour.

#### *Global collective indicators*

At the GHD meeting in New York in July 2005, donors agreed to a set of indicators to monitor collective progress. These are set out in Box 5.

Donors acknowledged that the proposed indicators were not perfect, but considered that the most effective way to assess the feasibility of using the indicators and improving on them would be to test them (GHD, 2005). Their feasibility has now been assessed, and the results will be included in the annual *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report*

## Box 5: Global Indicators

### **Flexibility and timeliness**

- Total donor funds committed to ongoing crises between 1 January and 31 March as a share of total funds committed to those crises during the calendar year.
- Amounts committed to individual onset disasters within the first month as a share of the total funds committed to individual disasters up to six months after the disaster declaration.
- Amounts committed to all onset disasters in the first month as a share of the total committed in the year following the disaster declaration.
- Proportion of funds earmarked at the country level or above. Amount of donor funding committed at or above the country level as a share of total donors' humanitarian commitments.

### **Donor and agency funding for CHAPs and CAPs**

- Number of CHAPs based on IASC Needs Assessment Framework (NAF).

- Proportion of funds committed to the priorities identified in the CHAPs.
- Funds committed to the countries with the largest percentage shortfalls as a percentage of the total funds to CAP countries in 2004.
- Percentage of funding to the five least-funded CAPs compared with the average percentage of funding for all CAPs.

### **Donor advocacy and support for coordination mechanisms**

- The number of donors subscribing to joint statements in support of coordination mechanisms and common services delivered at each of the UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP governing body meetings.
- Amount of total funding to UN coordination mechanisms and common services.

Source: Development Initiatives, 2006.

produced by Development Initiatives.<sup>9</sup> The Global Indicators<sup>10</sup> make a substantial contribution to donor accountability in that all but one of them – ‘number of CHAPs based on IASC NAF’ – is directly attributable to donor action.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, the indicators can be seen as measures of donor behaviour. The performance information gathered through tracking against the indicators can therefore contribute to assessments of progress in implementing GHD. The information can also be used to hold the donors committed to GHD to account, and to inform individual donors’ behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

The major limitation of the Global Indicators is that they do not provide a means of assessing progress against all of the GHD principles. The indicators relate only to financing and coordination. In addition, the coordination indicators are set at the global level, not the field level. As such, they provide an incomplete set of guidance and accountability measures, and are primarily relevant to donor headquarters. The clarity of the indicators in terms of attribution and responsibility is a positive step forward, but prioritising certain elements of GHD over others risks limiting the process purely to funding, and relevant primarily to headquarters. This perception was evident in a number of interviews conducted for this study.

#### *Individual institutional indicators*

It could be argued that, as collective performance is dependent on institutional change, efforts to establish a system for monitoring and evaluating GHD at the individual donor level could contribute to improved collective performance. While this is true, very few GHD donors have established such systems. Canada has developed specific indicators of performance, and the UK government has set targets in its Public Service Agreement, which governs the Department for International Development (DFID)’s performance against its budget approvals. Four other donors have strategies in the public domain. This represents less than a third of the donors that have committed to the GHD principles. Even for these donors, it is questionable how useful these strategies are as monitoring and evaluation tools.

#### **Policy guidance and locating responsibilities**

Developing policies and guidelines is ‘a precondition for translating political commitments

9 See [http://www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org/Good%20Humanitarian%20Donorship%20Indicators%20Report%202006\\_GHD%20Web.doc](http://www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org/Good%20Humanitarian%20Donorship%20Indicators%20Report%202006_GHD%20Web.doc).

10 These indicators are at times referred to as the ‘GHD indicators’. However, to distinguish between indicator sets we use ‘Global Indicators’ here.

11 CHAPs, and whether or not they are based on the IASC Needs Assessment Framework, are the responsibility of OCHA.

12 Development Initiatives has offered to make available to individual donors an analysis of their performance against the agreed indicators.

into behavioural changes’ (de Renzio et al., 2005: 14). To date, collective efforts to promote improved donor behaviour at the field level have centred largely on the country pilots in Burundi and DRC. In many respects, these pilots presented the best opportunity to provide clear guidance to donor staff in the field on why, when and how to engage with GHD in a collective manner. However, the pilots have not substantively contributed to the operationalisation of GHD principles or to improved donor accountability. Reviews conducted in both Burundi and the DRC found that understanding of GHD was limited (Gregory, 2005; Kinkela et al., 2004). The lack of clarity (or communication) on the objectives and purpose of the pilots also caused complications in terms of ownership and responsibilities between the field and donor headquarters (Harmer et al., 2004: 6). Clear guidance on respective roles and how to implement GHD in the field was not available, discouraging action. This closely reflects findings from the review of the implementation of the Rome Declaration, where surveyed staff ‘lamented the fact that they recognised the importance of harmonisation, but they weren’t sure how to reflect that in their practices’ (de Renzio, 2005: 14).

In addition, the heavy emphasis on the CAP/CHAP evident in the country pilots resulted in Burundi in the perception that ‘donors had not applied GHD specifically enough to themselves, examined their own practices, or tried to find ways to strengthen their own approaches and principles in support of greater effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action’ (Gregory, 2005: 4). This further clouded understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of different actors. A greater focus on collective donor behaviour in the field would have facilitated discussions around the objectives of GHD, and contributed to debate on the meaning of GHD in field contexts and the development of guidance for field staff.

A draft set of guidelines for field staff has since been produced. While a positive step, the draft, released in June 2006, focuses solely on coordination and provides no practical advice on the many other aspects of the GHD principles that should inform donor behaviour at the field level. While these may vary between donors, depending on the degree of autonomy country offices enjoy, GHD commitments relating to areas such as the use of military assets or obligations to facilitate safe humanitarian action clearly have implications for donor representatives in the field (including staff in government departments other than aid agencies). More comprehensive and action-oriented guidance is needed to encourage and enable action in the field.

#### **Procedural flexibility**

Better policy guidance would help donors to develop operational procedures to ensure that their

staff are aware of their capacity and ability to engage in and promote collective activities. One of the main impediments to implementing the Rome Declaration was the lack of relevant operational procedures. Donor agency staff were not clear about what they could and could not do to promote collective priorities. This paper argues that field staff require consistent and clear advice as to what flexibility exists in adopting common arrangements, rules and regulations relating to programming, financial management, procurement and joint decision-making. Such operational procedures would need to be informed by collective objectives, but tailored to individual institutions.

Insufficient monitoring and evaluation systems, inadequate policy guidance and a lack of clarity around responsibilities and procedural flexibility have all been identified as significant obstacles to translating high-level commitments into mainstreamed change. The GHD initiative has made efforts to overcome these obstacles, with varying degrees of success. While recognising that everything cannot be done at once, a piecemeal approach to implementation is unlikely to achieve the traction required to bring about normative change. An overarching and comprehensive framework is needed to guide efforts at the collective and individual level; to communicate what GHD means in practice; to clarify roles and responsibilities; and to enable agencies to commit to a common understanding of progress that can be measured over time. The remainder of this paper outlines a proposed collective performance framework, and recommends ways in which such a framework could be used to overcome the constraints to full and systematic GHD implementation.

## Section 4

### Towards a collective performance framework: a focus on process

If the GHD initiative is to succeed in encouraging greater donor accountability and learning, a collective performance measurement framework is required. This must be designed in such a way as to prioritise attribution. Clear attribution can help actors assess the effectiveness of their policies and practices. Performance information can then be used to inform learning, and to contribute to accountability.

Establishing a performance measurement framework to analyse collective advances in implementing GHD is an essential step in promoting more deliberate progress towards changing donors' behaviour. As recognised by donors at the fourth international GHD meeting in July 2006, 'monitoring and reporting progress is crucial to maintaining the credibility and value of the GHD initiative' (Chair's Summary, 2006).

Monitoring and reporting on progress is clearly critical to donors' accountability. Effective performance measurement can also contribute to greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different actors, assist learning processes within and between donors, and provide incentives for changed donor behaviour. Clear performance indicators that articulate donors' responsibilities can also provide guidance for donor staff (and other actors) on what GHD means in practice, and in particular contexts. Such indicators can also help field and headquarters officials to define their comparative advantages in relation to each other, as well as to particular crisis responses.

To promote accountability and behavioural change, it is essential to ensure that the performance being measured is directly attributable to the actor concerned. Output measures, or 'process' indicators, are most appropriate for monitoring performance in this way. This should not be seen as diminishing the importance of impact measurement in the humanitarian sector as a whole. Rather, it is an attempt to clearly define donors' roles within a larger system – seen by experts as an important step towards improved accountability and performance at the systemic level (Raynard, 2000; Hofmann et al., 2004). This can then help inform discussions on how donors can be better partners for implementing agencies, and vice versa.

To achieve these objectives, a collective performance measurement system for GHD should comprise indicators that:

- highlight processes directly attributable to donors, and that are aligned with the principles of good donorship;
- are measurable and allow for the regular gathering of performance information;
- mix quantitative and qualitative measures to ensure that information on performance facilitates learning and enables donors to reflect on the full range of their responsibilities (both policy and financing);
- cover headquarters and the field (recognising that the split of responsibilities may differ between donors);
- facilitate the development of operational procedures for individual donor agencies;
- aid in evaluations of donor approaches to supporting humanitarian action; and
- focus on collective action and the behaviour of GHD donors as a group.

Table 1 (p. 11) proposes a set of indicators that draws on the lessons discussed above and meets the criteria outlined here. The indicators proposed focus exclusively on the responsibilities of donors in relation to the seven principles agreed by donors committed to GHD (numbered 4–10 in the original principles; see Box 1). This is a deliberate focus. A hierarchy of objectives is apparent in the GHD

commitments. The definitions and objectives outline the scope of what is considered humanitarian by donors, but the principles are the fundamental underpinnings of donors' endeavours within this. Moreover, the elements of good practice included in GHD are statements of intent that align with the principles (as we indicate in Table 1), and it would be too numerous and cumbersome to develop indicators against them all. The proposed indicators thus do not seek to duplicate donors' efforts to identify examples of good practice. Rather, they supplement these examples with clear indicators of how donors' actions might be measured. Seeing the principles as objectives allows indicators to be set so that performance against the principles can be assessed.

The indicators draw on research by HPG and others into effective and principled humanitarian action, as well as work on codes of conduct by other actors in the humanitarian sector (see the list of source documents at the end of this paper). They are intended as complements to the collective Global Indicators already agreed (described in Box 5), and can be used individually and as a full set. Likewise, while the indicators proposed here are meant for the GHD donor 'collective', they could also be adopted or adapted as individual institutional-level indicators. Indeed, individual donor indicators should also reflect the need for donors to contribute to improved collective performance, as argued above.

### Some technical notes

What makes a good indicator? There are different views on whether indicators should measure the direction of change (DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 2000: 23). The Global Indicators agreed by donors do not indicate directional change. However, our indicators do. They show the general direction of behaviour that might indicate 'good' donorship. This provides the greatest potential to guide decision-making and staff behaviour.

While the experience of implementing the Paris Declaration commitments shows that targets can 'spur progress' and 'accelerate the pace of change' (OECD/DAC, 2005: 2), baselines for many of the indicators do not currently exist, and it is beyond the scope of this project to develop them. Perhaps more importantly, donors must 'own' target commitments, and the responsibility for setting targets should therefore rest with donors.

While baselines do not currently exist for many of our indicators, targets expressed in relative rather than absolute terms could be developed.<sup>13</sup> To serve a positive purpose, targets must be

<sup>13</sup> A relative indicator could, for instance, state that a certain measure should increase by one-third rather than by a specific number or percentage.

### Box 6: A note on formal regulation

The framework set out in this paper is designed to measure performance at the collective level and to inform institutional-level performance measurement. It is not aimed at the establishment of a formal external regulation or accreditation system under the banner of the GHD initiative. Some would contend that GHD should be framed by a compliance model of regulation. The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition report, for example, has argued that 'there is an urgent need for external monitoring and control of donor accountability and performance [as] self-regulation is clearly not working' (Telford et al., 2006: 97). Formal regulation and compliance models of accountability imply penalties and/or exclusion from a collective. Yet such an approach would undervalue the positive role group membership can have in terms of encouraging and stimulating internal change within organisations (de Renzio et al., 2004: 8). Lessons from international relations theory show that treaties, for example, have value in inducing behavioural change beyond a strict focus on compliance (Mitchell, 1993: 328).

We suggest that a formal, penalty-based regulation model of accountability in relation to GHD would be counter-productive at this stage, though GHD donors will need to keep a watchful eye on this issue in the future. In many respects, the more donors endorsing GHD and joining GHD-led initiatives and fora the better. However, lessons from the Red Cross Code show that a large number of signatories (over 300 in the case of the Code), without a formal compliance system, can devalue or undermine the integrity of the initial agreement (Walker, 2005).

realistic, achievable and measurable. In developing targets, donors (in consultation with operational partners) should also avoid creating perverse incentives. The Global Indicators already agreed and tested by donors offer a valuable opportunity to establish targets for GHD donors. These indicators are primarily quantitative and clearly attributable. More qualitative assessments against other indicators could be helpful, since using a variety of different indicators can help avoid distorting overall objectives (DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 2000: 25).

Finally, we have kept the number of indicators to the 'bare minimum needed to represent the most basic and important dimensions', as recommended by the OECD (*ibid.*: 25), with the caveat that the indicators cannot cover all the actions that will progress implementation of the GHD principles.

Table 1: A proposed collective performance framework for GHD

GHD general principles	Suggested performance indicators	Discussion and sources of verification
<b>4. Respect and promote the implementation of international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights.</b>	<p>Donors articulate and implement complementary diplomatic and funding strategies in response to the protection needs of civilian populations arising from violence, wilful deprivation and forced displacement.</p> <p>Donors openly and jointly express statements regarding IHL obligations, respect for basic human rights and refugee rights, e.g. proportionality in the use of force, safe passage, maintenance of open borders, care for sick and wounded, and non-refoulement.</p> <p>Donor actions do not contradict international law.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> The indicators suggested here are qualitative in nature and are meant to demonstrate how ‘respect’ and ‘promotion’ of IHL could be understood in practice. They reflect the fact that civilian protection is a key objective of international law and is included in the definition of humanitarian action agreed by donors.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> Each donor will have different means at their disposal to encourage and support crisis states in protecting civilians, but a coordinated and jointly prioritised strategy amongst all donors will be the most effective approach.</p> <p><b>Relevant examples of good practice already agreed in GHD:</b> Referral to IASC, the Oslo and MCDA guidelines, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct. For fuller background, see points 16, 17, 19 and 20 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Sources of verification for these indicators could include press releases, statements in donor consultative groups, statements made in the UN Security Council and General Assembly, country assistance plans and evaluations of the role of donors in responses to crises (such as the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, parliamentary inquiries, international commissions of inquiry, reports from independent human rights agencies, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch).</p>
<b>5. While reaffirming the primary responsibility of states for the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, strive to ensure flexible and timely funding, on the basis of the collective obligation of striving to meet humanitarian needs.</b>	<p>An increasing number of independent evaluations find that assistance was complementary to affected state authorities’ plans for emergency relief.</p> <p>Time between release of appeal and funds disbursed is reduced over time.</p> <p>Donors agree to distinct comparative advantages in differing aspects of rapid response, and implement programmes accordingly.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> These indicators seek to demonstrate what ‘reaffirming the primary responsibility of states’, ‘timeliness’ and ‘flexibility’ and ‘collective obligation’ might mean in practice. They depend on both quantitative and qualitative information.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> Some baseline information regarding timeliness has been gathered through monitoring the Global Indicators (see Box 5). These suggest, for instance, that the majority of funds for flash appeals are committed within one month (see Development Initiatives, 2006). Commitment is not the same as disbursement — donors could, for instance, strive to disburse funds within six weeks. Agreeing distinct comparative advantages between donors, and agreeing strategies in line with them, would promote collective performance. Complementing (and where necessary supplementing) local response capacities and acknowledging state responsibility while meeting humanitarian objectives.</p> <p><b>Relevant examples of good practice agreed in GHD:</b> Reducing, or increasing the flexibility of, earmarking, introducing longer-term funding arrangements and encouraging regular evaluations. See points 11, 13, 14, 22 and 23 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Strategy documents, evaluations, Global Humanitarian Assistance, the Financial Tracking System, press releases.</p>
<b>6. Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments.</b>	<p>Donors’ own needs assessments are shared publicly and are standardised or conducted jointly.</p> <p>Funding decisions demonstrably relate to needs assessments. Donors make public their funding decisions and the needs assessment information on which they are based on at least an annual basis.</p> <p>Evaluations increasingly show that programmes funded are appropriate to needs identified.</p> <p>Evaluations show that donor funding for independent needs assessments is adequate.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> The emphasis sought here is on supporting quality needs and risk assessment processes and encouraging allocations according to them. The indicators are qualitative and quantitative.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> Any evaluation of donor performance should take into account the quality of data available at the time. In any situation of significant humanitarian concern, donors should be prepared to fund or reimburse the costs of agencies’ assessments if they are supported by robust evidence (including incorporating beneficiary views), can be read independently of any related funding proposal and are shared with the system as a whole. The results of such assessments should be seen as a valuable product in their own right (Darcy and Hoffman, 2003). While donors often rely on agencies’ needs assessments, they can encourage operational agencies to conduct joint needs assessments in areas of common sectoral interest. Donors could also seek to fund the collection of a range of data — both baseline surveys and more dynamic needs and risk assessments during crises. Examples include the ‘Integrated Phase Classification’ system used by the Somalia Food Security Assessment Unit (see <a href="http://www.fsasomal.org">www.fsasomal.org</a>). Deciding appropriate levels of funding is by no means a clear science, and will have to be contextual.</p>

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

GHD general principles	Suggested performance indicators	Discussion and sources of verification
		<p><b>Relevant good practice:</b> Transparency in decision-making, flexibility in funding, burden-sharing, regular evaluations and learning and accountability measures. See points 11, 12, 13, 14, 22 and 23 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Evaluations. Sources could include press releases, country strategy documents and programme design documents.</p>
<p><b>7. Request implementing humanitarian organisations to ensure, to the greatest possible extent, adequate involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response.</b></p>	<p>Donor-commissioned or -led joint needs assessments and joint evaluations involve local partners and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Levels of funding to programmes and agencies that involve beneficiaries in design, implementation and evaluation increase over time.</p> <p>Donors support local NGO capacity-building in programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and fund local NGOs to deliver assistance where possible.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> The suggested indicators depend on quantitative and qualitative information. They seek to demonstrate beneficiary involvement in providing quality control throughout the project cycle.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> Donors could consider funding as a priority agencies that have demonstrable capacity to work through local institutions and civil society, particularly when accompanied by adequate staff support and security measures. Sections within donor agencies responsible for development assistance should be supported internally by humanitarian policy experts to target local NGOs for support that have capacities and responsibilities in emergency response.</p> <p><b>Relevant good practice elements:</b> Encouraging NGOs and implementing partners to adhere to good practice, and ensuring that they are committed to accountability, efficiency and effectiveness; commitments to regular evaluations and reference to the Red Cross/Red Crescent and NGO Code of Conduct. See points 15, 16 and 22 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Country strategies, funding strategies, audits of donor agency performance, reviews of joint evaluations (ALNAP), joint country evaluations.</p>
<p><b>8. Strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and co-ordinate effectively with humanitarian partners.</b></p>	<p>Signatories to the Kobe/Hyogo declaration develop clear implementation strategies in relation to this.</p> <p>Funding for disaster risk reduction and local development of risk mitigation/emergency response strategies as a proportion of ODA is assessed by evaluations as adequate.</p> <p>Support to build the capacity of state bodies responsible for disaster planning and management at national and decentralised levels.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> The suggested indicators require both qualitative and quantitative data. They emphasise donor roles in relation to local capacity, disaster risk reduction, preparedness and local leadership.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> Implementation strategies should include targets, measures and institutionally relevant performance indicators. These indicators also complement the above indicators emphasising local leadership in design and response. Donors should, where possible, jointly prioritise their actions with local actors.</p> <p><b>Relevant good practice elements:</b> Commitments to flexible, timely funding and support for contingency planning and, where appropriate, funding for capacity-building in relation to this. See points 12 and 18 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Donor country strategy documents, annual reports, global aid reports (DAC, GHA), corporate policy documents.</p>
<p><b>9. Provide humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities.</b></p>	<p>CHAP or other appeal priorities are reflected in joint country assistance strategies (e.g. UNDAF or Joint Assistance Strategies)</p> <p>Proportion of GHD donors that have developed clear guidance, conflict-sensitive programming and portfolio management structures for their country representatives to manage the transition from emergency aid to reconstruction, recovery and development (e.g. through funding strategies and guidelines) increases over time.</p> <p>Livelihoods approaches, support for remittances, market preservation and income-generating opportunities are supported through funding or advocacy during emergency response (e.g. asset protection, use of cash and voucher programmes, food for work programmes). Where this is not possible, justification is given based on publicly available feasibility studies.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> The indicators suggested here are primarily qualitative. They seek to highlight donors' role in reducing inconsistencies between humanitarian assistance and local recovery (including any potential development assistance in support of this).</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> The indicators seek to address common obstacles in planning and strategy-setting between humanitarian and development/security wings of donor governments. They also see development mechanisms and expertise being better integrated in donor aid management processes (whether through UN mechanisms or joint country strategy setting). The last indicator draws on ODI research highlighting the most likely mechanisms to support recovery and longer-term development.</p> <p><b>Relevant good practice elements:</b> Transparent and flexible funding, support to contingency planning in humanitarian organisations, continual learning and accountability and longer-term funding arrangements. See points 12, 13, 18 and 21 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Feasibility studies, audits of donor agencies, evaluations, reviews of CHAPs in relation to country strategies (joint or otherwise).</p>

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

GHD general principles	Suggested performance indicators	Discussion and sources of verification
<p><b>10. Support and promote the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and co-ordination of international humanitarian action, the special role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the vital role of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organisations in implementing humanitarian action.</b></p>	<p>Proportion of donors using standardised reporting and monitoring from UN, Red Cross/Red Crescent and NGOs increases over time.</p> <p>Reporting requirements for agencies reduce in number and emphasise outcomes increasingly over time.</p> <p>HC/RC consulted, at a minimum, in deciding country and regional allocations.</p> <p>The number of multi-year funding arrangements from the collective of donors to the ICRC, and NGOs with demonstrated effectiveness in appropriate aid delivery increases over time.</p>	<p><b>Nature and emphasis:</b> The indicators suggested here are quantitative and qualitative. They seek to emphasise the ‘central and unique role’ of the UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and NGOs.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b> The indicators suggested here should be discussed in relation to initiatives to improve the quality and capacity of humanitarian coordinators and their offices, including funding to improve technical support in needs assessment and needs-based prioritisation and decision-making. Implementation strategies should also consider developments in cluster leadership.</p> <p><b>Relevant good practice elements:</b> Commitments to flexible and timely funding to UN programmes and humanitarian agencies, burden-sharing, IASC guidelines, MCDA, Oslo guidelines emphasising civilian leadership in conflict-related crisis response and clear guidelines covering the use of military assets in crisis response. See points 12, 14, 16 and 19 of the GHD outcome document.</p> <p><b>Suggested means of verification:</b> Evaluations, agencies’ annual reports, statements in donor support groups for UN agencies and the ICRC, donor funding frameworks and agreements.</p>

## Section 5

### Conclusions and recommendations: using a collective performance framework

The collective performance framework proposed here has been developed on the basis of an analysis of the limitations of existing indicators and approaches to measuring implementation of GHD commitments; comments by donors and operational partners obtained through interviews; a review of the literature relating to other codes guiding humanitarian action and examples of best practice; and work by the DAC and individual donor agencies to improve individual performance. While the indicators have been circulated for comment they have not as yet been tested in the field. They are not as extensive as they might be, but are kept to the bare minimum necessary to reflect core elements of the GHD commitments.

Donors should develop a collective performance framework that is comprehensive. The framework suggested here is offered as a contribution to this development and as a basis for broader and more comprehensive dialogue around the application of each of the GHD principles at headquarters and in the field. An agreed collective performance framework should be road-tested, and should involve independent experts, operational partners and beneficiaries, to ensure that the performance framework makes a valuable contribution to improved partnership.

#### The GHD donor forum

Once agreement to a collective performance measurement framework is secured, the GHD donor forum should provide improved policy guidance

to field staff, in line with the agreed framework. To ensure regular assessments of collective progress in implementing the high-level GHD commitments, donors should commit to an annual joint evaluation of their response to a particular crisis. Involving the DAC Network on Development Evaluation in this process would be beneficial. Joint evaluations of donor performance would complement the measures already in place to assess individual donor performance through the DAC peer review process, in that it would focus on the broader donor group and include action at the field level. An annual joint evaluation would also facilitate more qualitative assessments, thereby complementing the largely quantitative assessment of the Global Indicators that will be included in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance* report.

Significant steps have already been taken to increase the number of joint evaluations in both the development and humanitarian communities. However, to ensure donor accountability is enhanced it is essential that the annual joint evaluation focuses specifically on donor performance against agreed indicators. Attributing responsibility is essential to improve learning and accountability. It would also contribute to improving understanding of the impact of the humanitarian system. The joint evaluation process would promote collective engagement, and its findings should guide priority-setting for the GHD initiative and its donors. Finally, the experience of the Paris Declaration survey indicates that assessments can contribute significantly to improved understanding and awareness, and can act as a stimulant to greater engagement with the commitments and their implementation. An assessment of donor performance against an agreed performance framework could be a component of a joint evaluation of the

broader response against the criteria recommended by the DAC for evaluations of humanitarian assistance: effectiveness, impact, relevance, sustainability, efficiency, appropriateness, coverage, connectedness and coherence (OECD/DAC, 1999).

### Individual donors

It is important to remember that it is donor *governments*, not just donor agencies, that have committed to GHD. Work must therefore continue to ensure that all parts of government engaged in humanitarian action are aware of performance measures, and that their operations are designed in such a way as to facilitate good performance against these commitments.

Individual donors should endorse the indicators as measures of their own individual performance. If aspects of the collective indicators are not considered relevant to any particular agency, modifications should be made, whilst ensuring that the link between individual and collective performance remains strong. The adoption of performance measures by individual donors should be reflected in the accountability systems that operate at domestic level. This includes reporting to parliament, performance assessments by audit offices and review processes internal to donor agencies.

As discussed previously, the implementation of high-level commitments can be seriously undermined if operational procedures do not enable the actions required to implement these commitments. Individual donors should therefore undertake a systems assessment to review the extent to which their procedural requirements and regulations facilitate or constrain progress on GHD, and commit to implementing reforms where constraints are identified. This review should also consider the incentives and disincentives influencing the actions and behaviour of donor staff, and identify where incentive systems are undermining progress on GHD. Individual donors should ensure that policy guidance agreed through the GHD initiative is effectively disseminated at headquarters and in the field, and across all government departments engaged in humanitarian assistance. Following the systems review, guidance on operational procedures should also be developed and disseminated.

### Operational partners

Agreement to a collective performance framework also has the potential to strengthen the dialogue between donors and their operational partners. Implementing agencies clearly have a crucial role in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and donor behaviour has implications for the quality of agencies' work. Effective partnership is dependent on clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and on an understanding of what each partner needs to

contribute to ensure good outcomes. Agencies also play an important role in holding donors to account. A collective performance framework should provide a useful tool for advocacy and a basis for dialogue between operational agencies and donors, both at headquarters and in the field.

Previous HPG research has found that advocacy on GHD implementation by stakeholders has been limited (Harmer et al., 2004: 3). Research conducted for this paper suggests that this may be due to a perceived intangibility of the GHD initiative amongst key operational stakeholders. The performance framework proposed here seeks to overcome this obstacle and increase the tangibility of GHD for donors and stakeholders alike. Interviews also highlighted that a number of agencies continue to see GHD as a separate initiative relating to official humanitarian aid, or as primarily a funding matter. This could undermine the significant advocacy opportunity GHD presents. Through the GHD initiative, donors have committed to a set of principles and practices relevant to all elements of humanitarian action. These commitments could provide a platform on which a range of advocacy strategies can be built. Attributable and comprehensive indicators should facilitate this. There is significant scope for improved collective action on the part of operational agencies in exploring the full potential of the GHD initiative as an advocacy tool, and as a way to structure dialogue around partnership requirements.

## Summary of recommendations

### *Recommendations for donors committed to GHD*

- Agree to develop and adopt a collective performance framework in line with the full range of GHD principles, which can provide clearly attributable performance measures to enhance donor accountability, clarify roles and responsibilities and inform the further development of policy and procedural guidance.
- Develop, road-test, improve and apply the collective performance measurement framework. Road-testing should include input from field staff, operational partners and other government departments.
- Discuss the establishment of targets for the Global Indicators already agreed.
- Commit to conducting an annual joint evaluation of GHD donors' response to a particular crisis, and assess collective performance against agreed performance measures.
- Ask the DAC Network on Development Evaluation to test an agreed performance framework and engage in regular joint evaluations of donor performance.
- Revise and extend guidance for field staff on the application of all GHD principles, and provide guidance for headquarters staff to promote collective decisions on responses to crises.

- Adapt collective performance measures to the individual institutional level and undertake a systems review to identify operational constraints to implementation within individual institutions.
- Develop guidance for field staff on the scope for collective action in policy development, priority-setting, financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation and needs assessments.

#### Humanitarian agencies

- Develop clear positions on how donors can successfully progress the full range of GHD principles and improve partnerships with agencies.
- Collaborate at the international level to input into donor discussions regarding collective performance measurement. This discussion should be on a regular basis and could most

effectively be channelled through membership groups such as the International Council on Voluntary Aid, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, InterAction and VOICE.

- Collectively consider the performance framework proposed here and provide clear criticism of the performance framework, recommend modifications or advocate for its adoption to the GHD forum and with individual donors.
- Collaborate at the national level to advocate for clearer performance measures against the full range of GHD principles and commitments to GHD implementation.
- The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) should consider taking on a more formalised role in conducting regular reviews of collective donor performance using the performance framework proposed here.

## References

- Borton, J., M. Buchanan-Smith and R. Otto (2005) *Support to Internally Displaced Persons – Learning from Evaluations, Synthesis Report of Joint Donor Evaluations*. Stockholm: Sida.
- Chair's Summary (2005) Third Annual Meeting on the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, New York, 12 July, <http://www.reliefweb.int/ghd/GHD%20Meeting%20July%2012%20-%20Chairs%20Summary.doc>.
- Chair's Summary (2006) Fourth Annual Meeting on the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, Geneva, 13 July, <http://www.goodhumanitariananddonorship.org/Latest%20new%20charis%20summary%204th%20GHD%20meeting.doc>.
- Chr. Michelsen Institute (2005) *Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan 2001–2005: From Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, A Joint Evaluation*. Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2000) *Results Based Management in the Development Cooperation Agencies: A Review of Experience, Background Report (draft)*. Paris: OECD/DAC.
- DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness: Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. Paris: OECD/DAC.
- Darcy, J. and C.-A. Hofmann (2003) *According to Need?: Needs Assessment and Decision-making in the Humanitarian Sector*, HPG Report 15. London: ODI.
- De Renzio, P., D. Booth, A. Rogerson and Z. Curran (2005) *Incentives for Harmonisation and Alignment in Aid Agencies*, Working Paper 248. London: ODI.
- Development Initiatives (2006) *Paper D: Report by Development Initiatives on GHD Indicators 2004 and 2005*. Report Prepared for the Fourth International Meeting on GHD, Geneva, July.
- Gregory, S. (2005) *Lessons Learned from the Good Humanitarian Donorship Pilot in Burundi 2002–2005*. London: DFID.
- Hofmann, C.-A., L. Roberts, J. Shoham and P. Harvey (2004) *Measuring the Impact of Humanitarian Aid: A Review of Current Practice*, HPG Report 17. London: ODI.
- Harmer, A. and A. Stoddard (2005) 'Review of Good Humanitarian Donorship Domestic Strategies', ODI/CIC, [http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/papers/GHD\\_Domestic\\_Strategies\\_review\\_2005.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/papers/GHD_Domestic_Strategies_review_2005.pdf).
- Harmer, A., L. Cotterrell and A. Stoddard (2004) *From Stockholm to Ottawa: A Progress Review of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative*, HPG Briefing Paper 18. London: ODI.
- HPG (2005) *The Currency of Humanitarian Reform*, HPG Briefing Note. London: ODI.
- Hilhorst, D. (2005) 'Dead Letter or Living Document? Ten Years of the Code of Conduct for Disaster Relief', *Disasters*, 29:4.
- Kinkela, C., J. Thompson and L. Poulson (2004) *Baseline Survey, Good Humanitarian Donorship Pilot, Democratic Republic of Congo, Final Report*. New York: OCHA.
- OECD (2005) 'Aid Effectiveness: Three Good Reasons Why the Paris Declaration Will Make a Difference', *Development Co-operation Report*, 7:1.
- OECD/DAC (1999) *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies*, Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness (1). Paris: OECD.
- OECD/DAC (2005) *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability*, High Level Forum, Paris, 28 February–2 March, [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf).
- OECD/World Bank (2005) *Harmonisation, Alignment, Results: Progress Report on Aid Effectiveness*. Paris: OECD.
- Raynard, P. (2000) *Mapping Accountability in Humanitarian Assistance*. London: ODI.
- Roche, C. (1999) *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning To Value Change*. Oxford: Oxfam/Novib.
- Telford, J., J. Cosgrove and R. Houghton (2006) *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean tsunami: Synthesis Report*. London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.
- Vaux, T. et al. (2001) *Independent Evaluation: The DEC Response to the Earthquake in Gujarat*. London: DEC.
- Walker, P. (2005) 'Cracking the Code: The Genesis, Use and Future of the Code of Conduct', *Disasters*, 29:4.
- Willitts-King, B. (2004) 'Good Humanitarian Donorship and the European Union: A Study of Good Practice and Recent Initiatives'.