National humanitarian response

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Question

What are the lessons arising from case studies illustrating the development of nationally-owned and -led systems for responding to humanitarian crises in developing countries? How do governments manage flexible budgeting and planning processes to respond to these crises?

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1. Overview

In recent years there has been greater interest in the role of national governments in humanitarian response, although the focus still tends to be on the international response. This rapid review looks at the lessons from case studies where national governments have developed and strengthened their humanitarian response, including through the support of international actors. The vast majority of the available literature focusing on national government response is grey literature evaluations of a number of different case studies. In addition, Scott et al (2014, p. 9) find that there is a gap in empirical, independent research focused on analysing disaster risk management capacity building activities at the national level in developing countries to determine what works and why.

National governments have the primary responsibility for leading and coordinating humanitarian response in their countries. Where they have the capacity, state-led responses have been evaluated to be more effective than responses led by others. However, international actors often fail to work effectively with national authorities.

The cases studies indicate that national disaster management systems can be strengthened through:
- An **impetus for change** such as a specific disaster highlighting state weakness or civil society advocacy that can inspire governments to assume leadership.

- **National disaster management legislation** which provides a framework for ordered and distributed responsibility and the institutional and financial tools needed.
- **National disaster management institutions** such as a structure at the national level that coordinates disaster management operations and policy among all national and international actors and a national agency with operational disaster management responsibilities.
- Strengthening and coordinating the **national to community level**.
- **Government led partnerships** with civil society, community, and international actors.
- **Mainstreaming disaster management** throughout different government ministries.
- **Training and sharing of knowledge**, such as through whole-of-government disaster simulations.
- **Evaluations** to learn from and improve on previous responses.
- **South-south capacity building** that can be an important source of support.
- The **military** which also play an important role in responding to natural disasters.

Challenges for developing and strengthening national humanitarian response include:
- **Low-income countries** can struggle to develop effective national humanitarian response.
- **Limited capacity**, especially at the local level, as a result of low government spending priorities, lack of effective frameworks and structures and an overall lack of resources.
- **Competition for resources** with other agencies, short term political planning and high staff turnover limit the capacity of national disaster management agencies.
- **International actors** may ignore or undermine government actors in their response.
- There is sometimes a **lack of trust** between government and international actors over humanitarian response.
- States, especially in conflict-contexts, may be **reluctant to meet their humanitarian obligations**.
- **Large-scale disasters** can overwhelm national systems.
- **Donor funding constraints** can be counterproductive to national disaster management strengthening.

Some national governments are devoting increasing funds to **humanitarian financing**, for example through set budget allocations, national budget surpluses from oil revenues; a fund for disaster response in rural areas; market-based risk transfer mechanisms; a reconstruction fund to help states meet co-financing requirements for infrastructure; donations from individuals, businesses, and the diaspora; and (mandatory) insurance for states.

International actors can help strengthen national disaster management capacity by focusing on working within national frameworks, addressing capacity gaps, and advocating for government-led responses.

2. National systems for responding to humanitarian crises

National governments have the primary responsibility for leading and coordinating humanitarian response in their countries under UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (GHA, 2014, p. 41; Featherstone, 2014, p. 11). Many do respond to humanitarian emergencies; however, the 'domestic response is often ignored, unreported and uncounted' (Shushilan, 2010, p. 4, 18). Examples of governments asserting more control over national response include Indonesia, India, Mozambique, El Salvador, and the Philippines (Harvey, 2009, p. 41; Harkey, 2014, p. 6).

Most national governments have disaster management legislation and an entity mandated to manage and respond to disasters, often known as a national disaster management authority (NDMA) (Featherstone, 2014, p. 11). While other actors may play important roles in the national disaster management systems, thorough strengthening of these systems requires government leadership and a commitment to change

(Harkey, 2014, p. 6). However, a lack of government leadership, minimal popular support for changes or governments' undervaluing of popular will, and a lack of national expertise on the issues may lead to governments being slow and/or unwilling to commit to developing an effective and comprehensive disaster management system (Harkey, 2014, p. 6). Many governments still require international assistance for a large-scale response (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 6). In addition, gaps remain in the humanitarian response systems of countries which have strengthened their national systems, especially in relation to their progress toward, and approach to, disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery (Harkey, 2014, p. 41).

Where the state had the capacity, state-led responses have been evaluated as being more effective than responses led by others (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 6). The benefits of national ownership of humanitarian response include stronger links between humanitarian work and broader development activities, and increased government legitimacy and accountability (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 5). However, currently the 'international humanitarian system does not take sufficient account of national actors' and often fails to work effectively with national authorities (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 6; Harvey, 2013, p. S152).

Lessons: what works

A study looking at four case studies (El Salvador, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Indonesia) found a number of lessons on what works for strengthening national disaster management capacity (Harkey, 2014). Additional lessons were found by a number of other studies looking at various other countries. They include:

Impetus for change
Governments have assumed greater leadership in strengthening the national disaster management system as a result of two main elements (Harkey, 2014, p. 6). First, governments have recognised that they *have* to strengthen their approach as a result of a specific natural disaster that caused substantial damage and highlighted the weakness of the existing system, for example in the cases of Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake or Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami (Harkey, 2014, p. 6; Harvey, 2009, p. 9).

Second, strong civil society advocacy for responsible and effective disaster management and technical support has also helped bring about capacity strengthening changes and improved the quality of legislation, in El Salvador, Indonesia, and the Philippines, for example (Harkey, 2014, p. 7, 15). In El Salvador, for instance, the network *Mesa Permanente de Gestión de Riesgo* conducted public and government advocacy and drafted a first version of new legislation (Harkey, 2014, p. 15). Local pressure was complemented by international actors, which supported the strengthening of national- and local-level capacity (Harkey, 2014, p. 41).

National legislation
One of the most important tools for governments in strengthening their ability to lead and structure disaster management work is disaster management legislation, as occurred in El Salvador, Indonesia, and the Philippines for example (Harkey, 2014, p. 14). Legislation provides a framework for ordered and distributed responsibility, as well as the institutional and financial tools necessary to successfully implement the system (Harkey, 2014, p. 14). For instance, in Bangladesh, the National Plan for Disaster Management, established coordination from the national to the Union level (lowest administrative unit), and resulted in an expanded and better organised response (Shushilan, 2010, p. 16, 27). It is important that all actors understand this legislation and each other's roles and responsibilities (Expert comment).

Legislation can be an important starting point for a new disaster management system in contexts that previously did not have a comprehensive or adequate system (Harkey, 2014, p. 14). At the request of the governments and civil society in the Philippines, Indonesia, and El Salvador, international actors provided training and direct technical support to those working on the legislation (Harkey, 2014, p. 19).

Policy plans have also proven to be transformational, as in Mozambique, for example, with the 2006 'Master Plan: Director Plan for Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Disasters' (Harkey, 2014, p. 14, 33). This made important changes to national institutions and priorities, based on gaps in the government's response, and the distribution of functions between national and international actors (Harkey, 2014, p. 14, 34).

National institutions

Government should be comprehensively accountable for the different roles and responsibilities of the disaster management cycle (Harkey, 2014, p. 20). This requires institutions such as 'a structure at the national level that coordinates disaster management operations and policy among all national and international actors, a national agency with operational disaster management responsibilities, and diverse line ministries that have disaster management-related responsibilities', although government structures for responding to disasters can vary widely (Harkey, 2014, p. 20; Harvey, 2009, p. 11). These institutions are often replicated at the different subnational levels (Harkey, 2014, p. 20). In many contexts in the Asia-pacific region, governments have chosen to adopt a de-centralised response model (Expert comment). However, this can become overwhelmed in large scale disasters, especially if they are not adequately resourced (Expert comment).

Experience in El Salvador, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Indonesia indicates that 'the most significant changes in operational disaster management effectiveness accompanied the creation and/or changes to the architecture of the national and sub-national disaster management systems' (Harkey, 2014, p. 20). The government response in Mozambique to the 2007 floods has received praise, with the role of the official body responsible for disasters (Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades (INGC) seen as being particularly effective (Harvey, 2010, p. 14). International donors strongly supported the creation of the INGC, helping to fund the employment and training of 285 staff and equipping a national headquarters and several regional offices (Harvey, 2010, p. 14). In addition, donors such as the German agency GTZ, also seconded staff to the INGC and paid for projects such as training and simulation exercises (Harvey, 2010, p. 14).

Complications can arise if the necessary systems for management (political system, largely for the elected officials who often have the right to declare the state of emergencies) and operations (tactical systems for responders/practitioners) get mixed up, as has occurred in Indonesia and Malaysia (Expert comment).

National to community level capacity strengthening

It is essential to strengthen the national disaster management architecture from national to community level (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). National-level changes designate laws, policies, and resources that will guide the system (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). The sub-national level is crucial for ensuring the strengthening of local systems which design and implement locally adjusted risk mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery tools (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). One expert notes that capacity building is a long-term process and overt international support is essential to show that donors prioritise national capacity and recognise its importance (Expert comment).

Despite being challenging, 'the creation and strengthening of local mechanisms, which government officials and populations alike are familiar with and involved with, is a powerful means of ensuring local ownership

of and effectiveness in the disaster management cycle' (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). This has been one of the most important factors contributing to national strengthening in El Salvador, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Harkey, 2014, p. 7; Expert comment). Scott et al (2014, p. 16), also find that there is a need to engage simultaneously with multiple levels of government, as well as with NGOs and communities when capacity building for national disaster risk management.

Coordination between local and government mechanisms
Capacity strengthening at the sub-national level needs to follow standard guidelines and link to official systems so that parallel systems are not set up (Harkey, 2014, p. 8). Parallel systems may lead to a dangerous lack of coordination in disaster contexts and reduce communities' access to government resources (Harkey, 2014, p. 8). If possible, communities' existing systems should be integrated into official mechanisms, and supported as appropriate to ensure maximum effectiveness and coordination (Harkey, 2014, p. 38).

Government-led partnerships
National humanitarian response capacity strengthening has resulted from partnerships between government, civil society, community, and international actors in El Salvador, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Harkey, 2014, p. 7, 32). However, there needs to be government leadership in disaster management systems and in the national capacity strengthening (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). Scott et al (2014, p. 14) also find that in order to build effective capacity for disaster risk management, programmes should be country-led and aligned behind government priorities, specifically a national disaster risk reduction strategy or national sector plan. Recognition of the technical skills and perspectives of other national actors may also help strengthen the system and contribute to its sustainability (Harkey, 2014, p. 7).

Mainstreaming disaster management
A particularly effective way of responding to humanitarian emergencies in El Salvador, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Indonesia was found to be mainstreaming disaster management responsibilities throughout the policies and initiatives of various different government ministries (Harkey, 2014, p. 7, 37). This was also important for preparedness and risk reduction (Herkey, 2014, p. 7, 37-38). For example, land development and agricultural practices can be adjusted to consider climate change predictions (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). In Bangladesh, for instance, disaster risk reduction has been mainstreamed into national policies, institutions, and development processes as part of the Bangladesh Poverty Reduction Paper (Shushilan, 2010, p. 15).

However, this needs to be done properly to be effective. In Uganda, disaster management desk officers in the various sector ministries appointed to lobby for the integration of disaster issues, often have no prior knowledge of disaster management and are expected to perform the role in addition to existing responsibilities, lessening the effectiveness of the structure (DRT, 2010, p. 14).

Adequate government strategising on approach to capacity strengthening
Needs assessments and a system to track the interventions of all actors can help governments to prioritise resource allocation, track capacity strengthening impact, and facilitate coordination between government, national, and international actors involved in capacity strengthening (Harkey, 2014, p. 7). Coordination between government agencies implementing Climate Change Adaption and Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives, for instance, can prevent competition for funds and resources, confusion and animosity, and lost opportunities to combine strengths (Harkey, 2014, p. 7).

Training and sharing of knowledge

It is important that government staff training is institutionalised to ensure its comprehensiveness, consistency, and regular availability (Harkey, 2014, p. 37). It may be expensive and take a long time but staff competence is 'essential to making the system stand on its feet' (Expert comment). Training should consider the different needs of national actors (Harkey, 2014, p. 37).

National Disaster Management Agencies have increasingly both generated and shared knowledge through mock exercises or simulations, which can strengthen trust between participants and allow them to take risks and learn in a safe environment (Featherstone, 2014, p. 6, 28-29). Agencies responding to the 2007 floods in Mozambique highlighted the value of a simulation exercise carried out in 2006 by INGC (Harvey, 2009, p. 9). There are a growing number of cases of collaboration, both between NDMAs and international organisations and between different countries, in the use of whole-of-government disaster simulation exercises (Featherstone, 2014, p. 29). External support can help make simulations as realistic as possible (Featherstone, 2014, p. 30).

The development of disaster policies and guidelines is another way for NDMAs to share their lessons learned and ensure standards and practices are implemented (Featherstone, 2014, p. 6, 38-39; Harkey, 2014, p. 37). However, only the better-resourced NDMAs are able to create a systematic approach to organisational learning (Featherstone, 2014, p. 6).

Evaluations

After-action reviews and evaluations have sometimes been used in various different countries to strengthen future responses, although they are rarely independent (Featherstone, 2014, p. 22). This has generally occurred in countries with national legislation on disaster management, an established NDMA and a department or national institute mandated to support learning (Featherstone, 2014, p. 23). Members of NDMAs felt that in some cases these reviews had helped other government ministries and departments to better appreciate the role played by the NDMA (Featherstone, 2014, p. 23). These reviews have also helped NDMAs strengthen their capacity, and build upon recommendations, such as in the case of Pakistan (Featherstone, 2014, p. 24). Collaborations with international organisations have been 'particularly successful in complementing national capacity to learn from disaster responses' (Featherstone, 2014, p. 26).

Peer learning, south-south initiatives and regional institutions

Research into learning by NDMAs suggests that south-south capacity building can be an important source of support (Featherstone, 2014, p. 35). Mozambique, for example, drew on disaster officials from Guatemala to provide capacity support (Harvey, 2009, p. 31). Regional institutions have helped to foster technical cooperation between NDMAs, and helped to pool expertise in areas where technical capacity is limited (Featherstone, 2014, p. 36).

The role of the military

The military have played an important role in responding to natural disasters in some affected states (Harvey, 2009, p. 11). For instance, the Pakistan military played a central effective role in the response to the 2005 earthquake as a result of the army's decision-making skills, logistical and coordination capacities and willingness to listen and learn (Harvey, 2009, p. 12). States in India can request the assistance of the Indian army, with the approval of the National Crisis Management Committee, and they were active in the response to various natural disasters (Harvey, 2009, p. 12).

Challenges

A number of challenges remain in the development and strengthening of nationally-owned and led humanitarian response, including:

Limited capacity

Emerging middle income countries such as Indonesia, who have greater levels of state capacity and resources, have faced less struggles than low-income countries in developing an effective national humanitarian response structure (Harvey, 2009, p. 24). Low government spending priorities for humanitarian response, lack of effective frameworks and structures and an overall lack of resources can result in limited capacity, especially at the local level (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 7). For instance, in Uganda, the functionality and effectiveness of some of the national humanitarian structures particularly at lower local government levels was reported to be limited, partly attributed to the lack of funding (DRT, 2010, p. 7). In Afghanistan, despite the organisational architecture for national humanitarian response having been developed, the authorities suffer from a lack of human capital and physical resources (Featherstone, 2012, p. 8). As a result, implementation of programmes is primarily through NGOs and UN agencies (Featherstone, 2012, p. 8). However, many of the more assertive middle-income countries still lack the genuine capacity to respond to humanitarian disasters (Harvey, 2009, p. 34-35).

Competition for government resources

National Disaster Management Agencies face the same issues as other government agencies in terms of competition for influence and resources with other government units, and are subject to short term political planning horizons and frequent staff rotations (Featherstone, 2014, p. 5). High staff turnover in government departments causes a loss of institutional memory, as was the case in Pakistan, for instance (Scott et al, 2014, p. 18; Abbasi et al, 2014, p. 44). This lack of resources can compromise organisational learning (Featherstone, 2014, p. 5).

Unilateral international responses and coordination issues

International actors who respond to humanitarian disasters without keeping existing state structures in mind risk overwhelming local capacity and can be damaging for the government's reputation (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 7; Harvey, 2009, p. 27). Some international actors fail to inform domestic authorities of their activities or are not sufficiently respectful of the national government's primary role in responding to emergencies, holding coordination meetings in English for example (Harvey, 2009, p. 8, 9). Governments and international actors have limited understanding of their relative capacities and roles (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 12). International coordination mechanisms can often duplicate or displace national coordination mechanisms (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 8; Harvey, 2009, p. 27; Harkey, 2014, p. 41). In addition, international responses can undermine government capacity through aid-fuelled inflation, brain-drains, overstretched institutions and loss of credibility (Harvey, 2009, p. 27).

Lack of trust between governments and international actors

There is sometimes a lack of trust between national governments and international aid actors which can prevent them working together to strengthen national humanitarian response (Harvey and Harmer, 2011, p. 40; Harvey, 2013, p. S165; Harvey, 2009, p. 28). National actors are not effectively represented in governance mechanisms of the international system (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 12). Harvey and Harmer (2011, p. 40) suggest that this could be helped to be overcome by moving from a 'capacity building agenda' to a discussion between equals about how states can better fulfil their role as a primary actor, while drawing on the strengths of international actors when needed.

Reluctance to meet obligations

Some governments may be slow to declare an emergency because they are concerned about the political and economic consequences of doing so (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 7; Harvey, 2009, p. 6). When governments are party to conflict or the creation of the humanitarian crisis, they may also be unable or unwilling to provide assistance and protection in an impartial manner (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 7; Harvey, 2013, p. S155, S160).

Large-scale disasters

Some large-scale disasters require a humanitarian response of such a magnitude that existing national disaster management systems are overwhelmed (Featherstone and Antequisa, 2014, p. vii; Expert comment). Despite considerable experience of national-led humanitarian response, the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines for instance was dominated by international humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms, as national capacity was overwhelmed (Featherstone and Antequisa, 2014, p. vii). However, more could have been done to build capacity in advance of the Typhoon to prepare for, and strengthen partnerships for response (Featherstone and Antequisa, 2014, p. vii).

Donor funding

National disaster management strengthening can be challenged by short donor funding cycles; disproportionate funding for disaster response over disaster risk reduction; counterproductive incentives to implement disaster risk reduction in a time period that does not facilitate effectiveness and sustainability; lack of clarity on how to strengthen community-level national capacity; and overlooking the needs of middle income countries (Harkey, 2014, p. 39-40).

Restrictions on NGOs

Effective cooperation with NGOs can be prevented by domestic legislation which is used to control their activities (Harvey, 2009, p. 10).

Corruption

Government corruption is seen by crisis affected people surveyed for the 2015 State of the Humanitarian System as a major constraint to the receipt of assistance (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 7). Therefore it is recommended that corruption is tackled in order to improve government capacity (Knox-Clarke and Obrecht, 2015, p. 15).

Financing

The domestic response to crisis often goes unreported and there is 'no reliable global figure for this critical and primary response' (GHA, 2014, p. 7, 41). Disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response activities are commonly spread across multiple budgets, making assessments of domestic spending difficult (GHA, 2015, p. 46). In order to ensure an adequate budget line, it is critical that government are convinced of the importance of their role in humanitarian response (Expert comment).

Many domestic governments spend substantial sums on disaster preparedness and response, negating or reducing the need for international support (GHA, 2015, p. 46). Records indicate that the governments of India and the Philippines, for instance, both contributed more than what they received in international humanitarian assistance (GHA, 2014, p. 7). Local Government Units in the Philippines are instructed to set aside a minimum of five per cent of their estimated revenue for the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (Featherstone and Antequisa, 2014, p. 3). In Mexico, the Ministry of Finance is bound by law to direct 0.4 per cent of its annual programmable federal expenditure to Mexico's National Fund for Natural Disasters (FONDEN). Additional financing comes from national budget surpluses from oil revenues;

a fund for disaster response in rural areas; market-based risk transfer mechanisms[1]; a reconstruction fund to help states meet co-financing requirements for infrastructure; and (mandatory) insurance for states (GHA, 2015, p. 48).

Greater humanitarian financing by the Ugandan government has helped to improve its response in terms of timeliness and the additional provision of relief items, instead of the solely coordination role they had previously (DRT, 2010, p. 7). In Uganda, other departmental budgets within the central government are sometimes cut in order to meet emergency humanitarian needs (DRT, 2010, p. 16). As well as the budget allocation to the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM), the Government of Bangladesh allocates funds to the agriculture, local government, health and education ministries for implementing various disaster-related programmes (Shushilan, 2010, p. 17). Additional financing comes from donations from individuals, businesses, and the diaspora to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, which allocates it to the MoFDM (Shushilan, 2010, p. 17). However, local governments do not have a budget for disaster response and cannot use revenue raised from taxes for it (Shushilan, 2010, p. 18). This is not necessarily the case in other countries.

Some countries, such as Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan, have also invested growing sums in risk reduction and disaster management (GHA, 2014, p. 41). These countries have dedicated disaster management governmental departments and legislative frameworks (GHA, 2014, p. 41; Shushilan, 2010, p. 4).

However, 'the capacity of national authorities to meet people's needs in crises varies enormously, as does the political commitment to assist the most vulnerable' (Lattimer, 2015, p. 4). Countries, such as Kenya, still spend less on domestic humanitarian expenditure than received in international humanitarian assistance (GHA, 2014, p. 41, 44). Other low income countries, such as Sierra Leone, also contribute very little domestic funding and often are overwhelmed when crisis strikes, and in need of international assistance (GHA, 2015, p. 46). However, even during the Ebola crisis, the Sierra Leonean government did invest in the response, which was financed by reducing its capital budget and borrowing USD 8 million from the domestic securities market (GHA, 2015, p. 47). Lack of adequate government funds meant that in Uganda for instance, district disaster management plans have not been funded (DRT, 2010, p. 14).

The Global Humanitarian Assistance report suggests that domestic resources in most crisis-affected countries look likely to remain stagnant with little prospect of government expenditure rising to required levels, as a result of low income growth, which limits the potential for raising tax revenues (GHA, 2014, p. 93). In other countries such as El Salvador or Mexico, Peru and Bolivia, governments have not adequately funded their humanitarian response structures and the assumption that foreign funds will pay for what is undertaken weakens the whole system (Harvey, 2009, p. 38).

Recent data suggests that only 3.1 per cent of all funding reported to UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service was channelled through the governments of affected states (Lattimer, 2015, p. 6). However, Pacific OECD DAC countries have helped the governments of disaster affected countries with liquidity so that they can respond to the needs of their citizens (Scott, 2015, p. 17). This included through general budget support and a contingent credit line giving governments immediate access to funds after natural disasters (Scott, 2015, p. 17). Other donors have offered similar financial support (Harvey, 2009, p. 37). Some donor governments have systematically encouraged partner governments to make domestic budget allocations for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response (Scott, 2015, p. 18).

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[1] e.g. Mexico's MultiCat 2012 bond – a USD 315 million catastrophe bond launched in 2012 with World Bank support that provides coverage against earthquakes and hurricanes (GHA, 2015, p. 48).

3. Lessons for international actors

One expert emphasises that donors are key to the process of strengthening national humanitarian response and need to understand its importance (Expert comment). A number of the case studies suggest that international actors, including donors, can help strengthen national disaster management capacity through (Harkey, 2014, p. 8-9):

- Work as far as possible within governments' national capacity strengthening frameworks and plans and encourage their development if they do not currently exist (Harkey, 2014, p. 8). In Pakistan, for instance, aligning with domestic priorities, including those of the NDMA, ensured that capacity building programmes were sustainable at the national level (Abbasi et al, 2014, p. 42).

- Assess and address the governments' needs for support to strengthen their institutional capacity and human resources training systems, including for line ministries and sub-national institutions. A better political economy analysis is important (Harvey, 2013, p. S162-S163; Harvey, 2009, p. 15-17). Harvey (2009, p. 16) suggests that 'where states are meeting their citizens' needs in times of disaster, international humanitarian actors are more likely to play supportive roles, building capacity, filling gaps and advocating for more effective responses. Where states are weak but have some willingness to meet needs, a combination of substitution and capacity-building will probably be appropriate. States that are unwilling to assist their people or which are themselves actively involved in creating a crisis are clearly the most difficult to deal with; in these circumstances, a combination of substitution and advocacy, to encourage states to fulfil their obligations, is likely to be necessary'.

- Strengthen civil society actors' technical capacity, advocacy, and ability to contribute to national capacity strengthening. Encourage partnership with civil society actors and networks advocating for an involvement in disaster management.

- Promote disaster management mainstreaming in government programmes.

- Coordinate interventions to strengthen local disaster preparedness and response with government authorities.

- Encourage partners to orient their disaster management activities toward partnership with, and capacity strengthening of, government and civil society actors. This could be carried out jointly.

- Strengthen links to NDMAs and facilitate a closer working relationship (Featherstone, 2014, p. 7). Hire staff who can speak the local language and who have local and national knowledge to work effectively with government counterparts (Harvey, 2009, p. 30).

- Acknowledge that strengthening national humanitarian response takes time and capacity development and partnership with government should be considered as a long-term strategic partnership and resourced accordingly (Featherstone, 2014, p. 7; Harvey, 2009, p. 38).

- Advocate for governments to respect the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence (Harvey, 2013, p. S164; Harvey, 2009, p. 24).

- Focus on influencing or supporting disaster management policies and legislation at the national level, but work with all levels of government and with technical line ministries in order to be effective (Harvey, 2009, p. 11).

- Channelling funding through government sends a clear message that governments should be responsible for the humanitarian response (Harvey, 2009, p. 37).

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