



Department
for International
Development



Performance Agreement

Between the United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland and the
United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees



October 2017

Why providing humanitarian assistance is important

1. The world is faced with a growing number of humanitarian crises, lasting longer and affecting a growing number of countries and individuals. In 2017, the humanitarian system has faced a number of challenges including conflict, famine and disease still threaten millions of lives in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria; devastation has been wrought by Hurricane Irma and Maria; and man-made conflict has caused thousands to flee Myanmar for Bangladesh. Reducing humanitarian need over the coming years will be key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring no one is left behind.
2. As an outward facing and generous nation, Britain continues to play a leading role in responding to humanitarian need and building a global crisis response system which is fit for purpose. By doing so, Britain helps to build a safer, more stable and prosperous world which benefits all.
3. The UK has more than doubled its humanitarian funding in the last five years, reaching £1.4 billion in 2015/16. We have responded to 32 crises including providing clean water for over 3.2 million people affected by war in Syria; shelter for 200,000 people in the aftermath of the earthquake in Nepal; 2,800 tonnes of aid to make Sierra Leone Ebola-free; clean water, hygiene and sanitation to 430,000 displaced Iraqis; and emergency support for the victims of war in Somalia, South Sudan and the Lake Chad region.
4. The UK's Multilateral and Bilateral Development Reviews made clear the UK's intention to use UK aid to make a transformational change to the wellbeing of the poorest people around the world. The UK was also a driving force behind the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, where the world agreed a clear vision for a radically improved humanitarian system. As one of the largest humanitarian donors, we will use our funding to support progress in delivering reform, particularly through a more efficient and effective UN-led humanitarian system that can meet vulnerable people's long-term needs.

The importance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

5. UNHCR was established in 1950 and is the world's leading organization charged with protecting refugees and other forcibly displaced people and with helping to resolve problems of statelessness. In the course of its 65-year history, the massive challenges of forced displacement have led UNHCR to move beyond its primary role in protecting and assisting refugees and helping to solve refugee problems, into a broader engagement with people forcibly displaced inside their own countries. UNHCR's work also extends to important areas of prevention and stabilization, including efforts to address the situation of the world's estimated 10 million stateless people.
6. UNHCR employs more than 10,000 staff working in over 130 countries providing critical emergency assistance in the form of clean water, sanitation and [healthcare](#), as well as [shelter](#), blankets, household goods and sometimes food to over 67 million people. UNHCR also arranges transport and assistance packages for people who [return home](#), and [income-generating projects](#) for those who [resettle](#).

7. As one of the largest operational humanitarian agencies in the world, UNHCR's role in maintaining a specific focus and expertise on forcibly displaced people is critical to DFID as we seek to improve how the international community addresses the needs of people in sudden onset and protracted crises.

UK support and engagement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

8. UK support and engagement with UNHCR is considerable; reflecting our shared commitment to international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law and ensuring that UK humanitarian aid reaches the most marginalised. The UK is an important funder of UNHCR, this includes £35m per annum in core funding. In 2016, UK support to UNHCR has helped contribute to:
- Resettling 125,600 refugees worldwide
 - 2.5 million vulnerable refugees, people displaced within their own country, asylum seekers and stateless people receive cash assistance in more than 60 countries
 - 60,800 stateless people to acquire or confirm nationality
 - 500,200 refugees return to their home country or country of origin
 - Livelihood initiatives for refugees in 80 countries so refugees are self-reliant and lead independent and productive lives
 - Providing shelter to more than 1.2 million people
 - Preparing for refugee emergencies and enabling UNHCR staff to respond and support 31 countries

Reforming the United Nations System

9. The UK is a committed member of the UN recognising its unique mandate and the critical role it plays in responding to global challenges, as a key part of the rules-based international system. Our vision is an effective UN that fulfils its key objectives as outlined in the UN Charter; and a UN that can respond effectively to the changing challenges of our time, building and sustaining peace, preventing conflict, responding effectively to humanitarian crises whilst preparing and delivering for the longer term.
10. A year on from agreeing the Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of the World Humanitarian Summit, and with unprecedented humanitarian needs continuing to grow, we require more from the UN system than ever before. The system needs to step up to meet this challenge, becoming more transparent, efficient and accountable. Fundamental to this is action on sexual abuse and exploitation, to ensure the strongest possible measures are in place to protect vulnerable populations, especially children.
11. It is firmly in the UK's national interests to work towards an international humanitarian system fit to withstand the challenges of 2017 and beyond. UN humanitarian agencies remain key agents for delivering international responses at scale. The UK will provide core humanitarian funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and six UN agencies – Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); World Food Programme (WFP); World Health Organisation (WHO); and International Organisation of Migration (IOM). Core funding will support agencies to maintain their capacity to respond rapidly to urgent humanitarian needs, shore-up operations in neglected or protracted crises and provide core services from headquarters.

12. The UK and UNHCR want to see commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, in particular, the 'Grand Bargain' between the main humanitarian agencies and bilateral donors, implemented as soon as possible. We are determined that the UK's core humanitarian contribution is also linked to ambitious reforms across the system. For the first time, we will make the release of 30% of funds contingent on all agencies working together to deliver WHS and Grand Bargain commitments, aligned with the key improvements identified in the UK's 2016 Multilateral Development Review as vital for the humanitarian system. These include leadership and collaboration, effectiveness, and accountability and transparency. Agencies will also need to do more to protect the most vulnerable people in crises.
13. Four years of un-earmarked core funding (amounting to £140m in total) will be provided to UNHCR to support faster and more flexible humanitarian response. This will be underpinned by an individual Results Framework to allow DFID to track the results that UK funding helps to achieve. 30% of these funds from Year 2 will be dependent on achievement by UNHCR and the other UN Humanitarian Agencies within the UN Humanitarian Business Case of joint performance criteria that contribute to system-wide reform.

Performance Agreement Criteria

14. To support UN reform efforts and to ensure the UK taxpayer's contributions deliver the greatest possible impact, we have agreed four areas which *all* UN humanitarian agencies will prioritise for further improvement. These priority areas are underpinned by specific quantitative targets that UNHCR will meet for performance-conditional funding to be released.

Leadership and Collaboration

15. In this time of acute humanitarian need, more effective leadership and coordination are crucial to ensure available funds can make the greatest impact. Competition for resources among agencies must give way to greater collaboration to deliver the best possible collective outcomes for people in need, regardless of legal status or what agencies can supply. In protracted or recurrent crises, more coherence between humanitarian and development action is vital in order to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term and achieve the SDGs.
16. To secure the UK's performance-conditional funding UNHCR will:
- Contribute to **high quality joint impartial and timely assessments of need**.
 - Contribute to **a common, multi-year and comprehensive response plan** that draws on the expertise of humanitarian and development actors and engage where possible with national authorities.

Effectiveness

17. A more effective response system should support countries at risk of humanitarian crises to be more resilient and prepared, well before disaster strikes. When an international humanitarian response is activated, aid should be delivered in the most effective and efficient way, offering the best value for money. Cash transfers, particularly digital transfers can be faster, safer and more cost-effective than providing relief in-kind, and they support local economies. We want to see cash transfers being used systematically, and at scale, wherever appropriate.

18. To secure the UK's performance-conditional funding UNHCR will:

- Ensure it **manages risk more effectively**, using risk analysis to target investment in emergency preparedness in high-risk countries and respond faster and better.
- **Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming** to deliver more efficient and effective responses.

Transparency and Accountability

19. We need more transparent and accountable humanitarian responses. The UK wants to be able to track in real time what UK humanitarian funding pays for and delivers, using improved, consolidated and open data. Beyond agencies being accountable to donors such as the UK, we also want to see much greater accountability of the UN-led humanitarian system towards populations affected by crises. Agencies should ensure that affected people continue to be better informed, allowed to participate in the decisions that affect them and ultimately empowered to make choices for themselves.

20. To secure the UK's performance-conditional funding, UNHCR will:

- **Role-model transparency** on financing and operations, working towards improved scores according to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.
- Invest in systems that **communicate with and seek feedback from affected populations** to improve humanitarian responses.

Protection of Vulnerable People

21. For the UN humanitarian agencies we will also expect to see collective action to improve the protection of vulnerable people. The UK and our UN partners believe that upholding people's basic rights and freedoms in times of crisis is a moral duty. Protection should be at the centre of humanitarian action, with agreed standards to ensure the safety and dignity of those most marginalised and vulnerable in times of crises.

22. To secure the UK's performance-conditional funding, UNHCR will:

- Contribute to **comprehensive protection strategies** that address the needs of the most vulnerable in crises (most often women and children, people with disabilities and older people).

Performance Management

23. UNHCR's performance against this agreement and the criteria within it will be assessed during an Annual Review process, Strategic Dialogues, and DFID reporting/review requirements, including impartial independent monitoring and evaluation, if required. A decision will be made thereafter on the release of performance-conditional funding as of Year 2.
24. The UK is part of UNHCR's Executive Board and will work to support independent scrutiny of UNHCR, for example through Strategic Committees and Advisory Boards, to ensure that it is following best practice in seeking value for money.
25. DFID and UNHCR have a zero tolerance approach towards fraud, bribery, theft, terrorist financing and corruption and any other misuse of funds.
26. UNHCR will work with DFID to address the suggestions from the completed Central Assurance Assessment.
27. This Performance Agreement will be updated annually and re-published with refreshed targets for UNHCR future performance as required.

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Published by the Department for International Development