

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX 2009:
CLARIFYING DONOR PRIORITIES

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PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction:

STROBE TALBOTT
President, The Brookings Institution

Moderator:

JOSE MARIA FIGUERES OLSEN
Former President of Costa Rica

Panelists:

ELIZABETH FERRIS
Senior Fellow and Co-Director
Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement

SILVIA HIDALGO
Executive Director, DARA

ROSS MOUNTAIN
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-
General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
United Nations

PHILIP TAMMINGA
Project Manager
DARA

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. TALBOTT: If I could ask everybody in the back of the room who would like to take a seat to do so, please. I stand between you and a video, so I will be fairly brief.

My name is Strobe Talbott. And it's my honor to work for all the colleagues from Brookings who are here this afternoon. And I want to welcome all of you to the launch of the Humanitarian Response Index.

The Index helps answer the need for reliable metrics that are very useful in judging the effectiveness of humanitarian action, which is truly the Lord's work. The Index also reflects the extent to which the donor community takes accountability seriously.

Today's event is very much a joint venture between the Brookings Institution and Development Assistance Research Associates, or DARA. It brings together some of our own scholars led by Beth Ferris, her colleagues in the project on International Displacement, and DARA, which originated the Index three years ago.

DARA was founded by Diego Hidalgo and his daughter, Silvia Hidalgo, who is here with us this afternoon. She is the director. It's also very good to see an old and good friend, Jose Maria Figueres. I've worked with him in several capacities that each of us have held over the years, including when he was president of Costa Rica.

A word of background before turning the program over to Jose Maria, who will moderate today's session. Humanitarian response is, to put it very bluntly, a major enterprise, I would even say a very big and important business. It has to be given the number of crises around the world: Sri

Lanka; the Democratic Republic of Congo, which Mr. Mountain knows very well indeed; Pakistan; and hundreds of other places that rarely make the headlines and yet are the scene of terrible human suffering.

Globally, humanitarian response costs about \$18 billion a year, at least that's what it cost last year, and employs a quarter of a million people. In Darfur alone, the international community is spending about a billion dollars a year and relying on over 13,000 humanitarian workers. Donor governments have a double responsibility, both to their own citizens who, of course, are also taxpayers, and to the recipients of humanitarian assistance.

The Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, which was established in 2003, has agreed on 23 principles and best practices to guide work in this important area. DARA's Humanitarian Response Index translates those general principles into specific indicators that can be used as benchmarks to assess how well the donor community and individual governments are adhering to those principles. So there's good reason to believe that the Humanitarian Response Index is going continue to help improve policies and thereby save lives. Beth and I are proud that Brookings can contribute both through its scholarship and its convening power to this goal.

So now, Jose Maria, I turn the program over to you. Thanks to all of you for being here.

MR. FIGUERES: Let's play the video, if I may, for three minutes and then we'll be on with our -- yeah, please.

(Video is played)

MR. FIGUERES: Buenos tardes, amigas y amigos. Good afternoon, dear friends. Thank you very much for participating with us this afternoon here at Brookings in the global launch of DARA's 2009 Humanitarian Response Index. Thank you, Strobe, very much for not only working with us on this very important project, but also for hosting us in our launch. Beth, thank you so very much. We're very proud of our cooperation.

We launched the first report two years ago in London with Kofi Annan. Last year's report we launched in New York with Jeffrey Sachs and we're just delighted to be here. I have the privilege and the honor of serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of DARA and it is my absolute pleasure to be the moderator for this afternoon's activities.

So before we move into our subject matter, let me share with you how we are going to conduct this event. First, we will hear two short presentations: one from Silvia Hidalgo, the executive director of DARA; and another one from Philip Tamminga, the Humanitarian Response Index director of outreach. Then we will move into a panel discussion where we will have both Beth Ferris from Brookings with us and Ross Mountain, together with Silvia, whom I will introduce when we sit down to the panel. And right after their interventions on the panel, we would like to open this up to a question-and-answer period where we would hope that you would pose your questions on the Index and the humanitarian space to either Silvia, Beth, or Ross.

Now, so much for mechanics. In the video we have just seen, it states very clearly that every year 250 million people -- 250 million people -

- are affected by disasters and/or conflict. That is the equivalent of four-fifths of the population of this country, the United States, being affected very year in such a way that they would lose their home, they would go hungry, they would be maimed or killed. That is the scope of the challenge that we're faced with in the humanitarian field.

Of course, in the advent of climate change, and some of us feel that with climate change already here, more of it looming up over the horizon, we are only going to need a lot more of effective humanitarian response. And against the backdrop of the present economic crisis the world will need years to come out of, where it is clear that we are going to see diminishing humanitarian budgets, that places then a premium on much more effectiveness with respect to the dollars that we invest in the humanitarian space.

And that is exactly where the Humanitarian Response Index comes in. It does a ranking of 22 nations and the European Commission on their humanitarian practices. It is, in that respect, a very important effort to move the needle, to move the needle towards better and improved quality of humanitarian interventions on a full \$10 billion, which are roughly invested into the humanitarian field every year by these donors. It is, in effect, the world's only independent ranking designed to measure how well donors are doing, and we will hear more about that in the presentations from Silvia and Philip. And although that may be easy to say, the only independent world ranking on donors, it is much more complex to put together.

The scale of producing the HRI every year is enormous. For this year's Humanitarian Response Index, data sent research teams into 13

crises around the world; several hundred agencies working in the humanitarian field were interviewed; more than 2,000 individual responses were gathered, which, together with the hard data that Philip will go into, allowed us to compose the final results of the Index.

To talk about this in much more detail, let me then already call on Silvia Hidalgo, who is the co-founder of DARA and who was also the person who first thought of putting the HRI together. Silvia.

MS. HIDALGO: Thank you. Good afternoon. It's really a pleasure to be here with you today to present the findings of the 2009 Humanitarian Response Index.

Crises, as we know, cause immense human suffering and humanitarian response is about saving lives, alleviating suffering, maintaining human dignity, and preventing and preparing for future crises. Humanitarian action in crises is often the most we can do, but it's also the least we can do. It's about you and me, and it's actually a shared responsibility.

The Humanitarian Response Index, as we've heard, annually assesses and ranks donor governments against their commitment to improve their humanitarian action. The HRI is really built on the premise that donors have a key and instrumental role to play in improving humanitarian response. The 23 OECD/DAC donor countries that we assess provide for an estimated 86 percent of total humanitarian funding, and their policies, decisions, actions have a huge bearing on what actually gets done in practice.

The GHD principles and commitments are the basis against which the HRI measures donors. And when the HRI Initiative and the GHD Initiative was signed, it was actually a time when we were all complaining about shrinking humanitarian space, the bilateralization and politicization of humanitarian aid. And actually, Larry Minear and Ian Smillie came out with this report called "The Quality of Money," in which they highlighted really four key disturbing findings, mainly that humanitarianism was not the main driver of donor behavior; that policy frameworks were inconsistent and contradictory; and, in fact, that in its application the whole of the humanitarian endeavor was far less than the sum of its parts; and that efforts were marked by a climate of mistrust and lack of transparency.

The GHD principles were really regarded as an incredible breakthrough and some in the sector were actually very skeptical about their application and practice. In DARA, we immediately felt that there was this opportunity to really make a difference and see whether the GHD principles could be put to use.

A particularly important and promising note regarding the GHD was the fact that the active and supportive role that the U.S. took in the adoption and drafting of the principles themselves is important in considering the U.S.'s role as a humanitarian donor, both in terms of funding, but also the role that the U.S. plays internationally. And according to certain estimates, the U.S. aid is about a third of the total OECD/DAC funding. So an improvement in U.S. humanitarian aid has a huge impact.

Speaking on behalf of all of us, I think we're particularly pleased because of this, to be presenting while here at Brookings, and

thanks again to Strobe and Beth for this. But we're happy to be in Washington, D.C. It's fitting because the U.S. is a country of great aspirations for transformational change, we know. But it's a country that also trusts process and the HRI tries to be all about process.

This year's HRI raises a number of challenges and great opportunities. And the challenges include mainly funding, access, protection, and prevention, and really the need for additional capacity in the humanitarian sector. As we began working in this U.S. Index, donors were unofficially telling us that we could expect decline in aid budgets given the economic downturn. And so we started off this year's Index really thinking whether this was actually really normal and where donor priorities lay.

In the field this -- or I wanted to tell you about an elderly woman that I met in -- it was actually in the Saharawi refugee camps. And she voiced her concern over that she had heard that we Westerners were facing a crisis and that they had been told that food rations were subject to decrease given both the crisis and donor fatigue. And with great kindness and empathy she actually asked me what donors were fatigued about and why there were tired, this woman who has been in a refugee camp for over three decades and who's waiting for a solution and to go home.

Well, in practice this year we've seen that traditionally budgets have been largely unaffected. This is mainly due to the lag time that occurs between when budgets are prepared and planned for and to when they are approved. The overall aid effort has been short of needs, primarily given the decrease in private funding, but all the increase in needs in many parts of the globe. I mean, Pakistan comes to mind, where we know that needs

have increased 500-fold as a result of the surge and the country is facing the most important displacement in its history. Oxfam, for example, said that Pakistan was also the largest funding crisis it had faced in the past decade.

We know that the World Food Program that was appealing for \$6.7 billion this year is now expecting to receive only \$3.7 billion by the end of the year. So there's really a concern that the gap between needs on the one hand and what's available on the other is just going to increase given the fact that donor countries are expected to have a 4 percent less income next year.

And so the question we ask ourselves is how do we follow a needs-based approach with limited funding?

The main challenge that we did come with -- see this year was access across the board. It's always been an issue, but it came as the major challenge in 10 out of the 13 crises that we covered. In Somalia, the number of international staff has dropped to zero from several hundred a year ago. We know that organizations were forced to leave Darfur when -- after Bashir's indictment with the ICC. Access was again an issue in Afghanistan. It is now in Pakistan as well. And just last week, the U.N. had to withdraw much of its staff from many parts of both of these countries.

But it's not just related to security concerns, but also political considerations and logistical issues that access be such a major problem. And we've seen that this is the case in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia and it was in Georgia as well, where even sovereignty is at times taken as an excuse to not -- to obstruct access.

And finally, the other major issue that I want to flag is really on prevention because the international system really has to find a way to see how we can make prevention pay. Across the board there is a continued failure to engage in prevention, and some crises this year were entirely foreseeable. It's the loss of lives in Sri Lanka, but also in Gaza and now again in Pakistan because as a result of the military surge, the displacement occurs. And regardless of what we know is going to happen, there's not enough contingency planning that goes into the process or supplies or humanitarian personnel that's placed in advance of a crisis.

But before we discuss the rankings and I introduce Philip, I really want to discuss just very briefly why an Index, because this is a question that comes -- is posed to us throughout the year, especially in our sector because our sector isn't accustomed to ranking exercises or indices. And actually a colleague warned me a brief while ago -- well, before we started the HRI, Silvia, if you want to make friends, don't do an index. And then we've learned this and it is true. But we really set out to find ways of using tools that are common in other businesses and industries, and applying them to our own to see if we could make a difference and prompt change.

The Index has been challenging, but it also presents unique opportunities, as Strobe mentioned, to define and measure issues and see how we monitor progress. And the beauty of an index is really that it can distill large amounts of information into a few numbers. What we've set out to do is providing also donor agencies with some points to see how they can

lobby for change within their own governments, and highlight strengths and weaknesses.

When I worked for the European Commission, I'd often meet some diplomats who would tell me what service do you work in?

Well, humanitarian aid.

Oh, we do okay in that, we're fourth.

And I wondered how are you fourth in humanitarian aid?

Oh, our national NGOs get -- are fourth in line in terms of funding.

And so you wonder, okay, how does that qualify as making you fourth? But actually when one sees -- and this was especially true in the wake of the tsunami -- how donors are quick to say that they're perhaps first in funding, first to arrive on the scene, first to provide funding to this agency or that agency, and then we understand that it is about sometimes saying who's first, who's second, and conveying things in more simple ways. So we thought that it was only fitting to try to measure donors based on what good donorship would mean in practice.

Speaking about the TEC actually, the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, was when we saw as well that donors beyond the pressure that they had felt to fund heavily in the wake of the tsunami, they were looking for guidance and lacked guidance on what good donorship was about in practice. So we found that certain donors felt that it was good -- being a good donor was all about disbursing funding very quickly while others wanted to wait for a very detailed needs assessment. And in the end, we also understood that it's going to be much more about process and seeing

how one can operationalize good practice and donors speaking more to one another and in general across all of the sector.

So actually I think that I really want to say that it's not that we feel that donors are at all the weakest link, but that their way of channeling improved humanitarian response. And in this sense, they try all attempts to increase their knowledge and transparency and drives for greater coherence to really strive to put people first and make the humanitarian endeavor more than the sum of its parts.

Thank you.

MR. FIGUERES: Philip, will you please join us, please?

Silvia, why don't you stay here for the panel discussion?

MR. TAMMINGA: We move backwards a bit, a very short presentation on how do we construct the HRI. What is the basis for gathering the evidence that we present in the book that I hope you've picked up at the entrance? And how have we generated some of these conclusions?

So first of all, as Silvia mentioned, this is based on donors' commitments that they themselves have signed up to beginning in 2003, with the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. And like anything else in this sector, these declarations are great. Good intentions are great. But what's really required afterwards is monitoring and following up. Are they being put into practice? Are they being used? Are they helping to influence the quality and the effectiveness of aid? And that's why we felt it was so important to construct an index to try to begin to put some measurements

against that and to see how the Good Donorship Principles are being applied around the world.

A little bit about how it's constructed then. We've taken those 23 GHD Principles and we've converted them into 60 indicators of good practice. These are indicators that we developed in consultation with a lot of experts within the sector, and they're an attempt to try to find a way to take what is essentially a political declaration into something that tries to measure how donor action is influencing the effectiveness of aid at the country level.

They're simple indicators in a way that look at questions like: Are donors putting conditions on their funding that affect the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide the aid in ways that meet the needs of people? Are they distributing their funding equitably? In other words, are they trying to cover needs in an equitable fashion? Do they support humanitarian organizations in trying to find longer term solutions to what are sometimes, and more and more, complex and complicated crises? How are they helping to do that? Are they helping to prevent and prepare for a future of increased humanitarian needs?

So these are the types of questions behind the indicators. We take them and we then send our teams out, as was mentioned, this year to 13 different crises. These are the hotspots around the world, places like Afghanistan, occupied Palestinian territories, Somalia, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Haiti -- areas around the world where we can see from both a geographic spread and from the types of different crises how well our donor governments are responding in those situations. And we talk to the people who are on the front lines of the

response. We talk to the people who are there, who have that relationship with their donors, and who are engaged with the programs to ask them, well, how are donors supporting you? Are they doing this well enough? What could they do better?

We also do a survey, a standard survey, across these 13 different crises and we gathered this year 2,000 responses on the different donors that we measure. So it gives us a very solid basis from which to assess how well donors are doing individually and collectively.

And we don't just stop there either. We do other secondary data from sources like the World Bank, the U.N., IMF, some of the appeals out of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the International Federation of the Red Cross. So we have a sense, also, whether or not we can support what we're hearing in the field with the data from other sources.

And that is all put together into the scores and compiled and statistically calculated into the rankings that we see -- 450 interviews, hundreds of different organizations, NGOs, U.N. agencies, Red Cross, Red Crescent -- and, again, it makes this one of the largest exercises of its nature in the sector. And while our focus is on donor governments, the process itself is very collaborative. It opens a space for dialogue around what good donor practice is and it helps us to identify where there's gaps and weaknesses in the international community's response to some of these chronic crises around the world.

And I just put the map up to show you a bit of the scale and scope of what we've been looking at. After three years now, we've gone to some countries two or three times. And we each have tried to include new

countries where we might learn something different or new or unique about how the humanitarian community is responding and how donor governments are responding. So, for example, we went to China, which in some places has already become a government donor, but in the case of the Sichuan earthquake was a recipient of aid. What can we learn from those types of experiences as well?

Places like Haiti or Colombia, where there's ongoing long-term crises, what can we learn over time? Can we track how donor responses are evolving over time? And that's really another important component that the Index allows us to do.

Now, all that leads us then, as I said, to these rankings. And in a way, the rankings are the top layer of a very complex and interesting research process. What's unique this year is that Norway is now the top-ranked donor, replacing Sweden, which was previously in that top-ranked position. Now, we have the United States at 14, going up 1 place this year in the ranking, whereas Canada has dropped 3 places. Spain has also gone up a notch as well as Germany. And we have four or five countries at the bottom of the ranking where we have seen very little progress over the last three years. I want to just quickly mention some of these donors and highlight why they are where they are in the rankings.

Now, Norway stood out in all of the different 60 indicators. They did very well across the board, both in the survey questions, the interviews that we did, but also in the quantitative data. And they do well in areas like providing funding equitably to the different parts or components of the humanitarian system. They also did well in areas like investing in

prevention and working with humanitarian organizations on conflict and disaster preparedness. They took high marks in areas like advocacy around access and protection. And that, when you put it all together, they come up as our top-ranked donor this year.

But they also have some weaknesses as well, and there are some areas where they could be doing better, like funding local capacities. So even the top-ranked donors, what we tried to do through the process is identify what their strengths and weaknesses are so that then we can work with donor agencies, with humanitarian organizations that work with the Norwegian government, for example, and with civil society to say, well, what can we learn from this and how can we improve? Because at the end of the day, improvement is really what we're hoping to aim for.

Maybe just quickly mention the United States as well. Fourteenth in the ranking. We're very, very pleased to see that there has been this gradual improvement since the first Index. It's gone up one ranking. And it's important to mention that changes in the donors' rankings and donors' performance will take time to trickle through from changes in policy that will then be reflected in the practice at the field level. But the U.S. has some really good strengths and ones that we would hope that the government could build, that donor agencies could build on: the use of promoting good practice and quality standards in the organizations that they fund; looking at and the equitable distribution across the world and trying to make sure that all crises are covered, including the ones that are forgotten, the ones that don't get media attention.

But it has some areas, too, where it could improve. And one of the ones that consistently comes across both in our survey data and quantitative data is making sure that U.S. humanitarian assistance respects the neutrality and the impartiality of humanitarian aid. It doesn't confuse humanitarian objectives with other political or other concerns. So there's areas for improvement there.

Maybe just one more to highlight this. France ranked at 20th this year. France is one of the better donors in terms of disbursing money quickly in the times of a disaster, a sudden onset disaster. But they're another country where they have really consistently come up in our indicators with not doing so well in areas around impartiality, not putting conditions on their aid, respecting neutrality in humanitarian assistance.

So that's a quick snapshot of the three of them. I want to highlight a few other things, too, though. If you look at this graph, on our scale -- and I want to make it clear, it's not a perfect scale. There's no performance measurement system that's perfect; it can always be improved. But we feel pretty confident that there's a good amount of data in there that can help us identify and pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. And if we look at all of the donors, even the top-ranked donors, none of them reaches 8 on our 10 point scale. And that reflects for us the gap between the ideals and the good intentions behind good humanitarian donorship and actual practice. Ten of those donors don't even achieve six on the scale.

You might say are we marking -- are we grading too harshly? And in a way, I think you'd want to have a very rigorous grading because we're talking about millions of people's lives at stake. But it's also, I think,

fair because we're applying the metrics against the commitments that the donors themselves have signed up for. So it's an important issue. The ranking in itself is an entry point for a more informed public debate on how governments working with humanitarian partners and working with civil society can improve the quality and the effectiveness of the aid that they give.

I just want to quickly highlight again a few other points that Silvia made. Beyond the rankings, issues that we see emerging out of the research process in our visits to these 13 different crises: the barriers to access. As Silvia mentioned, in 10 of the 13 crises that we visited, affected populations' access to humanitarian assistance was compromised and many of the times it was because of the reluctance of the host country to acknowledge that this was a humanitarian emergency to permit access. And this is an area, for example, where all of the people that we talked to said that donor governments can have a more coherent approach in terms of how they use their diplomatic force to help gain the access that's absolutely vital, so that people get the assistance that they need when they need it.

And related with that is failures in protection where, again, donor governments can put a lot of pressure on all of the different actors in a crisis to make sure that protection is a priority; that it's important that people are protected from harm; and that, again, we can restore their lives and their livelihoods and their dignity as quickly as possible.

A huge issue around the neglecting prevention. In all of our indicators, all of the donors are -- the average scores on the indicators

around prevention and preparedness, these are the weakest numbers in the Index for all donors. And with the likelihood of increased humanitarian shocks, of increased crises and disasters and conflicts, the capacity of the system is already stretched to the limit. So it's an important issue that goes beyond the humanitarian sector and it really needs to be addressed by policymakers and by the public about how are we going to prepare for and how are we going to collectively respond to a future of increased needs.

And finally, one other thing that I think strikes us after doing the Index for three years. We think that there's actually a gap in understanding of what good donor practice is. The GHD Principles, the declaration was developed in 2003. The humanitarian environment has changed dramatically since that time. And maybe it's time to refresh and rethink amongst the donor government community what good practice is. We found in our research that when we talked to humanitarian organizations, only one in five was very familiar with what good humanitarian donorship principles were. That's a pretty low amount of money -- or of knowledge and awareness. One in five. And it means that only a third were somewhat familiar -- or less than half were somewhat familiar and then a third weren't familiar at all with what good humanitarian donorship is.

So in the relationship between donors and implementing agencies we think it's really time to begin to reflect on what good practices and what makes a donor help and facilitate effective humanitarian action, and what acts as an obstacle. So that's one of the conclusions, again, from our report this year is that we need to focus our efforts in those types of areas, and get the donor community together to look at access and

protection around prevention and preparedness, and perhaps start more dialogue and debate about what good donor practice is in today's context, and how can donor governments and their partners apply it more effectively in times of crisis.

So some recommendations. Again, look at the GHD Principles. Look at some specific context, specific guidelines that might help donor agencies understand what they can do in complicated situations around access and protection. And really looking at harmonizing and linking up the funding available for prevention and preparedness, and scaling it up so that we're better able collectively to deal with increased needs in the future.

I'll leave that at that and give it back to President Figueres.

MR. FIGUERES: I think I just pulled the microphone here.

Okay.

So, very well. Thank you so much, Philip.

Let me then move into the interactive part about their intention. And if I may please invite first Beth Ferris to join us and then Ross Mountain.

Beth is a senior fellow at Brookings. She is the -- Beth is also the co-director of the Bern Project on Internal Displacement. And she contributed a chapter to this year's HRI, our project entitled "Invisible Actors: The Role of National and Local NGOs in Humanitarian Response."

Ross Mountain, will you please join us as well? Ross Mountain has been, for the last five years, the U.N. resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator in that small country called the DRC that's the size of about a continent itself, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Before that

he has been the U.N. DP resident in complicated geographies such as Afghanistan, Iraq, 10 other nations around the world. He has a long and distinguished career in the humanitarian field within the U.N. system, which is coming down to its final hours, I would say, as we sit here. And we're very pleased and very proud that Ross is going to be joining the senior leadership team of DARA going forward.

So let me open it up to your questions, please, if I may. We have a roving microphone that will be brought around to you so that you can formulate your question. If you're so kind as to say who you're asking the question to, we would very much appreciate it. Let me offer the floor.

MS. FERRIS: Weren't we going to say something first?

MS. HIDALGO: Yes, let's let Ross speak and then Beth.

MR. FIGUERES: I'm sorry. Of course. I'm getting in front of my script. Ross, please open up. And then, Beth, I would like to hear from you as well, your comments on the project.

MR. MOUNTAIN: It might have been easier to just ask questions perhaps.

MR. FIGUERES: I'm so sorry.

MR. MOUNTAIN: It is indeed a pleasure to have the opportunity of being with you here this afternoon, as Jose Maria has said, in my final days with my responsibilities for Congo and with U.N.

And perhaps harking back, I was indeed at the inception, the meeting in Stockholm that did bring about the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. And it was an interesting initiative. It was one that came out of a series of meetings held in Montreux and Geneva, first of all, where annually

donors would come together and see how the consolidated appeal process could be improved. And after a while, those of us who certainly agreed it should be improved, felt that it couldn't really be improved, the coordination, without the donors themselves recognizing their role in this process. It was all very well to have a nice integrated plan and then Donor X coming in and saying, well, that's very nice, but I'd like to do water supply by UNICEF in the south. Pity it doesn't happen to be in your overall program.

So the donors then who were in Geneva, who organized this, decided they would organize the Good Humanitarian Donorship and it was essentially leadership of the Dutch and the Swedes at the time. And viola, we have this now six years later.

We glibly talk about the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. And it's worth having a look, so I think they must be recorded each year in the HRI. But essentially, there are four, maybe five. It's, of course, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, and a lot of attention being paid, even then, to protection of civilians.

The bottom line of what we're trying to do is indeed saving lives and alleviating suffering. And sometimes in our discussions we tend to lose sight of what it is we are doing this for as we get rather enmeshed in the -- in some of the mechanisms and procedures.

I think this is a very interesting initiative. It's not a beauty contest between countries. It is trying to test the principles that have been agreed on in practice, and, of course, it's easier to announce principles than to actually apply them in practice. But I think -- I see this very much as an aid to donors, to check them to see how they can themselves find ways of

improving against standards that they, themselves, have adopted. And indeed, in that way, perhaps even mobilize additional political support as others have indicated to those seeking to improve the performance that they have locally.

The objective, again, is to help people, help people in need and crises. I'm coming from a country that loses -- has 1,500 people die each and every day from preventable causes. Half of them are kids under five. That's 35,000 a month. That's an Asian tsunami every six months. Every six months. All of those are preventable. This is above and beyond the normal mortality rate. One should be able to do something about that.

The GHD's principles beyond perhaps the headlines are not well known, it is true. Philip mentioned 20 percent. I'm quite impressed that 20 percent, actually, had heard of them. I think it must be even less than that. And I fear it may well be amongst those who perhaps should be more aware of what the GHD principles are, which is the representatives on the ground.

Sometimes the way the role is worked with the GHD groups is that many of them usefully comment on how coordination or other aspects of operations are moving forward, and, of course, that's always very welcome. But there's very little reflection, in my experience, at the country level of how donors themselves can address their own -- the moles in their own eye or how they can improve themselves. So that's, I think, an area that could be better addressed.

In DRC we've been a little bit of the guinea pig in what's called humanitarian reform in terms of coherence with our humanitarian action plan

which, of course, covers everybody. And we've decided that it doesn't make much sense to try and put projects in there in September when the funding is going to come in the following March. And, of course, the situation in these countries changes.

We've got the cluster approach. We're using regional coordination. And, of course, we have a pool fund, which last year managed something in the order of \$185 million. Large sums for, I suspect, you and me; small sums for the size of the country and the needs there.

There are real challenges indeed. The whole issue of needs assessments is a very imperfect science. If you don't have good indicators - and by definition, it's very hard to have them in some of the countries we're working in. It's very hard to be able to measure the progress that you make, which, after all, is why we're there, is to have the -- heighten the impact.

The donors can and have been very supportive in their advocacy efforts, both in terms of access and in terms of dealing with such issues recently as efforts by various provincial governments to regulate NGO performance and so on, which obviously is not something that we are in the process of welcoming. But perhaps one of the conundrums that we need to deal with, and I won't go into the details here, is in relation to the national sovereignty and the independence of the humanitarian operation NEXTIS, which many of you, I know, will have had to deal with yourselves on the ground.

Silvia and Philip have mentioned that access has been highlighted very much in the report. Of course, you have problems with physical access, but as well as access because of security reasons and in

dealing with armed groups. In one small part of the Congo, in North Kivu, we have had 22 armed groups, many of them not having much ideology except the idea that they would like to have, shall we say, a disproportionate share of the proceeds of mining and forestry, but others who do have ethnic or other objectives. We have had, this year alone, over 110 security incidents involving humanitarian actors in North Kivu alone. It's not always the most comfortable of professions.

In terms of the protection aspect that has been mentioned, for us and for many in complex operations, protection is the number one humanitarian need. Sure, there's need for food and water and shelter and the rest of it, but protection is really what people absolutely require. Freedom from fear, freedom from concern that they will be raped or worse if they go to the field, or that when night comes they will face the same kind of fate in their own homes, that is sometimes overlooked.

Presence is extremely important in terms of trying to provide protection. And it doesn't need to be people who are dedicated to protection operations, just presence alone. One of the things we've been able to do in the Congo is, in fact, marry the presence of U.N. peacekeepers to provide protection, which is not a humanitarian task, which is obviously a military task. And the results of that protecting internally displaced have been fairly positive, I must say.

Prevention was also mentioned. Contingency planning is an important aspect of our work. Interestingly, we are probably better at contingency planning for a worst-case scenario than for a best-case scenario. In North Kivu, for example, with events that are going on now,

which have caused about 3- or 400,000 displaced, the combats that are going on in the East at the moment, which is the downside obviously, but the upside is about 200,000 people have actually been able to go back home to other areas which were previously -- where previously the CNDP was running the -- and drove them out.

We have not been as good preparing for the reintegration of those who have -- of returnees who go home. And obviously the population's sort of stayed in place and often have suffered considerably, more than those who have, in fact, moved on.

In terms of contingency planning, it's also extremely important in national disaster situations or natural disaster prone areas for the capacity building of local organizations and the -- I think we all, again, know that the international effort at times of earthquakes gets the high profile. But the lives are actually saved by the neighbors and the community organizations who are on the spot. The importance of them being able to and aware of how they can most effectively operate is evident.

Relief to development. All of us who are in the humanitarian business, I think, seek to get out of it. We look forward to the day when we're not having to simply keep people alive, but that people, and indeed the mechanisms of the states, are operative so that one can move on to reconstruction and eventual development. We have endeavored to do something in the East where -- in Congo, which has brought together the security dimension, the political dimension, and the extension of state authority and the return and reintegration. We've, however, kept that very separate from the humanitarian action plan, again, because of the precepts

that we talked about at the beginning of independence, neutrality, impartiality. And that isn't to say there aren't benefits from one to the other and one needs to be able to see the way this works together.

And perhaps just a final word on funding and the role of the media. One of the people in the video talked about the -- being forgotten. Our media, 7-day, 24 hours a day media, does operate a little bit like a laser beam with the attention at one area or another. It is a challenge for us all to try and ensure that the news of the -- and the need for attention to some of these areas is maintained. It is a major challenge. I'm certainly not criticizing the media for this, but that's the challenge of the competitive world we live in. And I'm sorry to say that you will find that so often resources relate to the amount of media coverage that you get for -- resources for humanitarian effort. It's important that one tries to, therefore, maintain this interest, including finding other ways of linking with other events. One certainly hopes that one doesn't have to have a massacre in order to get sufficient media coverage to provide support for the humanitarian actors who work on the other less dramatic parts of these crises.

Final word is simply to say that, again, that while we are often focused on -- or spend much time on process and mechanics, it needs to be about impact. It needs to be about what we can do and how we can do better for the population. Much has indeed been done. I think it's fair to say if we look back that there has been considerable progress in our system. We're in the business of saving lives and avoiding that children are stunted and then going into (inaudible) as they grow up. We all can do better, be it us in the U.N., be it NGOs, be it donors, be it governments in particular, and

we need to improve further. I think the HRI is a very valid and valuable tool to that end.

Thank you.

MR. FIGUERES: Thank you so much, Ross. Thank you for your insights.

Beth, can we now turn to you, please?

MS. FERRIS: Thank you very much and thank you all for coming. Let me first say congratulations, DARA. You've pulled it off in terms of producing another Humanitarian Response Index.

I remember when I first saw this a couple of years ago, before looking at any of the statistics and the indicators, and there are always questions about methodology, but thinking what a great idea to have some instrument by which governments, donor governments, can be held accountable. So I think it's a great initiative and represents a tremendous amount of work in terms of the data analysis, the visits, the interviews, and so forth.

I'd like to talk just a few minutes about the article I wrote for this, and that is the role of national NGOs. You know, sometimes we think the international humanitarian system is made up exclusively by international organizations and people, but, in fact, the role of national organizations -- civil society, community-based organizations, organized NGOs -- is tremendous. As Ross said, often providing the immediate lifesaving assistance in the aftermath of a disaster.

The first humanitarian crises I was involved in was in 1984, '85, Ethiopia with the famine, and being just amazed at the quantity of grain

that was shipped by largely Western nations to Ethiopia. Just the sheer volume of it was overwhelming. And then learning that there were 30,000 congregations of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that were running soup kitchens to feed hungry people. I had never heard about those 30,000 congregations staffed largely by volunteers. It doesn't make it into our media coverage often; doesn't make it into the statistics we have on humanitarian financing, the contributions of civil society groups and mosques and local organizations, which inevitably initially respond, particularly to natural disasters, but also to cases like the recent Pakistani displacement, which is an altruistic expression of materials.

If you look at national NGOs, this is a crazy world. This is a crazy number of organizations that are involved. Sometimes the territories and understandings and definitions aren't very clear. I mean, the Bihar floods in India in 2007, there were 30,000 local and national NGOs, registered NGOs, ready to assist.

When I was in Jordan last week I was told -- I don't know this, but I was told -- that since 2003, there have been between 10- and 12,000 national local NGOs created. Ten- to 12,000 since 2003. I was told 90 percent of those are linked to a business, a family, a political party, a religious institution. And so ideas of nongovernmental, you know, how can you be sure organizations are truly independent? There are lots of questions. And this is true not just in Iraq, but indeed in many different contexts.

The sheer proliferation of NGOs makes it difficult for international actors to figure out how to access local NGOs, what roles they

can play, what capacities they have. We know that national NGOs -- first of all, generalizations are impossible given the sheer scale. Some are very, very professional, have activities in more than one country, would put many Northern agencies to shame. Some are very much mom-and-pop operations with good intentions, but perhaps not much in terms of the professional standards we've grown to expect in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

A general understanding about national NGOs has been, you know, they're usually pretty cost-effective, usually have pretty good access, usually have a good understanding of the particular context, but it may be difficult for them in conflict situations to speak out or to criticize the government because they're more vulnerable. And certainly in places like Sri Lanka and Darfur, you see that national or local NGOs have felt those constraints, but so have international NGOs. And in some places, such as Colombia, local and national NGOs have been in the fore in terms of denouncing human rights abuses and so on.

We talk about security and access. As access becomes more difficult for international workers or organizations, there's been a tendency to work through local NGOs in a dozen different places, whether it's Iraq or Afghanistan. A whole terminology has grown up of remote management, you know, by which internationals sitting somewhere control, manage, direct, guide action being carried out on the field by locals; some evidence that the risks may be simply transferred to local or national NGOs instead of the internationals. There seems to be an assumption sometimes, oh, they're safe because they kind of know their way around. And yet the amount of

resources dedicated to protection and security of either national staff of an international organizations or to national NGOs is much less.

National NGOs, like everybody in the international humanitarian system, are always looking for money. The search for money, for funding, you know, characterizes international NGOs, U.N. agencies, different kinds of organizations. National NGOs usually have a more limited scope of agencies to choose from. They tend to depend on international sources than on national, although the data on that simply aren't very clear. This colors their relationship with international NGOs. Sometimes they see themselves and are treated as subcontractors of the internationals with the white trucks. Sometimes their program priorities, like many of us in the humanitarian world, are shaped by the availability of funding. A donor may say, oh, we did kids last year. This year we're doing women. And you have local NGOs scrambling to come up with a good women's project because that's what's in this year.

The whole question of capacity building, which is central to the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, and indeed the HRI, I think we need to really think about what is capacity. Is capacity the ability to fill out neat log frames or do sophisticated monitoring and evaluation? Or is capacity also being able to speak a local language and understand complex clan structures which may provide protection to humanitarian workers?

We did some research on talking with national NGOs in four different countries and I was struck by the differences between how they define capacity building and how the term is often used in the international realm. They talked about capacity building in terms of building our

organization, our self reliance, our autonomy, our ability to function effectively as an organization. Internationals often see capacity in terms of being able to provide good services. Those aren't the same thing because if you want to be an autonomous, self-reliant, independent organization, you need support in terms of your funding streams that aren't too dependent on one source or another, and attention to relationships with the constituency to develop a real basis of community support.

Finally, I raised a number of questions I think are really interesting when you try to understand this often invisible part of the international humanitarian system. I wonder, for example, if the lines between international and national NGOs aren't blurring. More and more international NGOs recruit internationally. They promote good people from whatever nationality with experience in a range of situations and, increasingly, the faces of international humanitarian NGOs aren't all white Northern people. Perhaps some of those differences are changing.

Should national NGOs try to become more like international NGOs? Should we hold them or encourage them to develop more professional systems and more sophisticated programs? One of the problems may be that international NGOs are becoming much more like U.N. agencies. Actually, to go to some of the meetings with international NGOs, you have to speak this language, this language, this jargon that identifies you as an insider. You can learn it, it's not too difficult to learn, but that language can also serve to exclude those who don't learn that language just as not knowing English excludes tons of brilliant people from international debates.

I wonder if looking at national NGOs and civil society generally doesn't lead us to question the basic business model of international humanitarian assistance. Over and over again we hear from local organizations that the delivery of substantial quantities of international aid actually lowers our capacity. You know, concretely they take our good staff, you know, they hire them at much higher salaries; we can't compete. But does it have to be that way? A genuine international response should, it seems to me, be able to increase local capacity to serve this all-important role of prevention as well as good practices.

Finally, as I said, there are some really good things happening in the national NGO world. There's more awareness of the role of national NGOs internationally, more efforts to include national NGOs and things like cluster systems and global humanitarian platforms and so on, within some of the federations or alliances, if you will, whether the Red Cross/Red Crescent. People are really struggling with these issues of how we relate between different parts of the world, they're north/south issues, they're questions of power, who decides how the money is spent, which standards will be applied.

Twenty years ago, international NGOs often saw themselves on the margins of the U.N. Here was the U.N., here were the international NGOs saying we have a lot to contribute, let us be a part of decision-making. I think international NGOs now pretty much have a seat at the table in a lot of the main discussions going on. Maybe in 10 or 15 years, national NGOs will also be sitting and discussing these issues.

Thanks.

MR. FIGUERES: Beth, thank you so much for your perspective with respect to local capacity.

Now then, let me open it up to your questions at this point in time, and there's a microphone here which we will pass to you. If you are so kind to identify yourself and who you're posing the question to, we would very much appreciate it.

Well, perhaps while you think of your question, let me, Silvia, if I may, ask you a question. Why is it -- I mean, you've been in this space for 15 years, 5 years in the Balkans, 2 years in Central America. You have traveled to many of the crises that have been evaluated during the three years of the HRI. Why is it so difficult for donors to get it right?

MS. HIDALGO: Well, I think part of the problem is that they don't know what good practice is. And here I wanted to take the time to mention this book that has also come out, and there are copies available outside, which stems from this project as well, which is a (inaudible) project to the HRI. It's about raising the bar on humanitarian assistance and about promoting mutual dialogue and collaboration between the EU and the U.S. I, myself, am starting to learn that there are such huge differences in thinking and concepts between the donors -- well, between the U.S. and donors in the EU and other donors. And part of the problem that we've seen is that when it comes to good practice, there's a problem about knowing what good practice is, discussing good practice amongst donors, and also understanding that there's not -- no one-size-fits-all approach; that aid is very context-specific; and that it requires a collaboration and discussion and

dialogue in specific crisis settings to know what is the best approach in that area.

I was thinking of what Beth's comment was for national NGOs and remembering that this Brazilian NGO in Timor once told me that they really needed a hotline to know what all these acronyms meant and what this was all about. But we've also known the donors confuse a lot of the acronyms, even between OCHA and ECHO and other things, and that the level of knowledge is really low in terms of how one improves humanitarian response.

MR. FIGUERES: Thank you. Questions? Right here.

MR. MAULLIARE: Thank you to mention your book. I am Jean-Luc Maulliare, Center for Transatlantic Relations at the Johns Hopkins University.

I was in Afghanistan a few weeks ago and I heard many organizations there expressing concern that the global economic crisis could mean less money for humanitarian assistance. Is it a trend that you expect to see in the short-term or in the midterm, less money for humanitarian assistance?

MS. HIDALGO: Yes. I mean, unfortunately, there are already donors that have announced budget cuts, discussing -- well, this has been the case for Ireland and Italy. And Ireland is actually one of the donors that we have that is best ranked because they're principle-driven usually and they're important in funding a lot of the, let's say, second tier NGOs and actors. So we're also seeing that it's going to be increasing the problem

with, as I mentioned, 4 percent less income available through OECD/DAC donor governments.

MR. FIGUERES: Ross, you're straight out of the field. What's your take on that question?

MR. MOUNTAIN: Unfortunately, as Silvia has said, the number of donors -- and Ireland, I think, I noticed was number three on the performance list -- has been seriously obliged to reduce, and there are a number of others. But the major impact hasn't hit us this year, and I think Silvia has commented on that earlier. But I think next year is going to be a particular problem.

Remember, it also relates to GNP and you're seeing GNP in the Netherlands and so on, and Sweden, I believe, as well, have been particularly hit in that respect. So I think that is certainly a reality. But I think all of us want to try and make maximum use of the resources that we have as well, so it's a matter of us trying to see how we can do better with what we can get.

And Congo being rather fortunate in that the last five years donor support has increased fivefold, so -- to Congo, which was certainly an encouragement. We would obviously hope it doesn't slip back, but it remains a challenge for the future given the size of the demand.

MR. FIGUERES: Thank you, Ross.

Yes, please, the gentleman right here in the middle.

MR. CHARNEY: Hi, my name is Joel Charney from Refugees International.

A comment was made, I think, as part of the introductory remarks, the context has changed rather dramatically between 2003 when the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles were put forward and today. Yet I feel like the discussion and the presentations have been basically presentations that more or less could have been given six years ago. I mean, I'm hearing more continuity than change.

So I guess I want to push the panel a little bit and say what really is different about 2009 as opposed to six years ago? And what kind of -- can you be more concrete about what kind of changes we need in the system to make it more effective? It seems to me we've been at a rather general level and I think it might be useful to hear some more specific recommendations.

MR. FIGUERES: Beth or Ross?

MS. FERRIS: If you're talking generally about what's changed in the humanitarian world, I mean, I think the bombings of August 19, 2003, ushered in a new area of security restrictions with financial personal access implications.

MR. FIGUERES: Ross?

MR. MOUNTAIN: Yeah, I think it's a good reflection, but I do think there has actually been quite significant progress since then. If we look at some of what's called the humanitarian reforms, you've got the SRF, you've got the cluster system. We've had the pool fund as Sudan does. There are a number of these mechanisms that have come into being which do move in the direction of some of the principles that have been enunciated, so I think that's positive.

I think the concern about protection is much higher now than it was then, even without going as far as the RTP, the Responsibility to Protect, but the security regularly. Let's look at the mandate that the Security Council has given the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the Congo. The number one priority is protection of civilians, as you and your organization have so well pointed out. So, six years ago you wouldn't have had that.

We're seeing also the Security Council addressing issues of internal displacement. A decade ago that was internal, therefore, and that was not the business of the international community, so the ICC, attacks on humanitarian workers or crime against -- an international crime. So there are certainly, I think, a number of things that have moved in the right direction.

On the other hand, we, I think, need still greater leadership. We need, as you've heard, about protection and prevention and so on. I would also say that early warning we're not very good at. There are -- be it in the political complex field, be it in the field of natural disasters. I think much more can be done with the technology and the knowledge that is available at the moment.

Transition remains the Cinderella, I think, of humanitarian action. That's why we have actually gone for another mechanism entirely, having had about four or five years of running it, trying to get transition aspects linked to the humanitarian program. We've basically abandoned that for 2010 and are actually putting in a separate mechanism to deal with that.

So I think it is a differentiated scorecard, but I believe there's been real progress in some important areas as well as, inevitably, a lot remains to be done.

MR. FIGUERES: Thank you.

The lady right here, please, and then the gentleman in the back.

MS. HOWARD: Thank you. I am Julie Howard from the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa.

I'm curious about the -- is there a treatment of the United Nations, the agencies of the U.N., in this book? Because, I mean, certainly they -- for the U.S., they were one of the major conduits of our emergency assistance. And my organization works in food security, so just having observed over the last couple of years the increasing world of, say, the World Food Program, both in trying to lead with the other U.N. agencies a more coordinated response, but also, Beth, to your question about building local capacity. I mean, thinking about the Purchase for Progress Program and the capacity of that, perhaps, to bring about.

So, how do you see the role of the U.N.?

MS. HIDALGO: On the U.N. specifically, we would view it as Philip mentioned: we look at donors, at official DAC donors that we're ranking, but we also take the time and the opportunity to discuss and collect survey responses for what we call other donors. And sometimes U.N. agencies are also considered donors by both local organizations, but also by international NGOs when they've received a funding channel through UNICEF or the SRF or the funding mechanisms. So that enables us to see

how U.N. agencies or actors are comparing this in terms of their funding rules.

MS. FERRIS: In organizations like UNHCR, working increasingly with national, local NGOs, the number of those partnerships is really increasing and has also devoted quite a bit of time, energy, money, in trying to do capacity building, networking, exchanges within regions. So I think that progress has been made in that area.

MR. FIGUERES: The gentleman right behind you.

MR. KOONS: I'm Adam Koons from International Relief and Development.

What has been the reaction of the donors that have been rated in the Index? You know, if they're very low on the scale, do they get upset or promise to do better? Or is there some kind of reaction that you do get?

MS. HIDALGO: Yes, I mean, we do get some reaction from donors. But the way -- our reading at least the first year was that it's true that, as we mentioned, 86 percent of the funding is channeled through donors. They're actually at -- initiate many of the quality and accountability mechanisms that are done in this sector. So to have suddenly an outsider come in and develop a new product that looks more at their performance hasn't been something that's probably readily accepted by the donor community. But, in fact, the lowest ranked donors were telling us that it gave them some points to lobby for change within their own governments. So we found that donors we thought would be upset were actually happy about it, at least the humanitarian donor agencies.

And then also we found that to a certain extent, no one likes to be first in class. So we were surprised that, for example, Sweden wasn't as forthcoming as they could be. Norway seemed to be more amenable; they are second. But it very much varies. Also within donor agencies their positioning on the HRI as a whole depends on who one sometimes speaks to.

But we received -- the first year we received a letter from the GHD donor group that was questioning the rankings as an exercise and casting doubts on whether it was a beauty contest and what the HRI could contribute to. And since then we've tried to reach out and communicate more on the purpose and the objective of the HRI as a whole.

MR. FIGUERES: I would add that I think there's also a sea shift in the donor community that one observes over the last three years from, quite frankly, a position of not being very friendly the first year to now more donors coming around and saying, well, this is a valuable instrument for policy orientation. Let's work together. Let's see what we can learn from this and how we can improve our skills. So, it is becoming that tool for policy which it was designed to be from the beginning.

Right here, and then we have a question at the back. Yes, sir. You. Right here.

MR. BROWN: Yes, Edward Brown from World Vision.

I'm just looking at the pillar three on working with humanitarian partners. There's a lot of indicators regarding funding U.N. coordination, funding SRF, funding U.N. consolidated appeal, and then one regarding funding to NGOs. Is the assumption there that funding through U.N.

mechanisms is somehow preferred? It seems like by having so many indicators on that it would buy us against, for example, like the U.S. government, who tends to spread the wealth giving money directly to NGOs, NGO consortiums, et cetera.

MS. HIDALGO: You raise a good point because actually we've found that the GHD Principles themselves are very much skewed towards the U.N., so that's one of the difficulties that we have faced. And we're in the process of trying to see what good donor practice really is and what a principled approach would be and seeing how different donors are behaving on certain issues.

The SRF was created after the GHD Principles, so we had a question of whether that was good practice or not. Some donors, for example, feel that there should be a balance between what they provide to the Red Cross movement, from what is given to the U.N., from what is given to -- so basically a third. And Sweden, for example, is one example that I can think of, but there's really no -- the position that we take is that if you don't find any of the three actors at all, is when you're not supporting a specific group's rule. So we don't take the stance that it's better to give to the U.N. or that it's better to give to NGOs, but it's a problem if you don't give at all to one of the groups.

MR. FIGUERES: We'll have time for one question more here at the back. The gentleman back here and then I'm sorry, I think we'll have to --

MR. KINNOD: Thank you. My name is Jeremy Kinnod. I come from Mercy Corps.

I want to build a little bit on the last question in terms of looking at the U.S. score on this. I mean, I've just been noting down -- going through the book and noting down the various categories in which the U.S. scored the lowest and it tends to be issues related to international humanitarian law, refugee law, and so on, and then also some of these -- basically, broadly speaking, support for multilateral aid mechanisms such as the SRF and the U.N. agencies and so on.

I would second the sort of implicit critique in the previous question. I think that overly biasing towards U.N. -- support to U.N. mechanisms implicitly assumes that those are performing better and that, therefore, the lack of donor support for those mechanisms reflects a lack of commitment to effective aid or something along those lines. I think a plausible counterargument could be made that, in fact, given some of the real shortcomings, widely recognized shortcomings in a number of those mechanisms, it may just reflect a lack of donor confidence in those mechanisms.

On some of the IHL and human rights law and refugee law points, looking through the book, it seems that a lot of the scoring on that is based on domestic issues in the donor countries, whether certain international legal instruments have been ratified and reflected in domestic law and so on. On that point, to what extent do those domestic legal issues and ratifications and so on really affect the quality of the international humanitarian assistance that the donor provides to other countries? Is that really plausibly linked?

Thanks.

MS. HIDALGO: Well, on those two points, actually many of the indicators that we've used on the U.N. agencies and, as I mentioned, the GHD principles themselves, if you look at them, there's very much this U.N. bias. And that -- I mean, we recognize that, but a lot of the indicators that we've picked up, such as the SRF, that are after the GHD Principles were ratified, are the ones, the indicators, that, for example, have been based on a consensus among donors, like the Development Initiatives Project on common indicators for measuring donor performance. So it's not something that we've just look at ourselves. And what we're looking at is more in terms of burden sharing across all of the donor funding more than specifically what one is giving to (inaudible) these mechanisms.

On the second position, we always, as well -- your second comment, sorry -- that we always, as well, get this question over whether one is looking specifically at what the countries are doing or what specific agencies are doing within a country. But for humanitarian response, it's actually very important what a country as a whole does in terms of their diplomatic efforts on humanitarian aid and what they stand for, both at home and abroad. We're, for example, just to take UNISDR and the Hyogo framework, they've even said that it was important, if you're serious about disaster risk reduction, then you have to have, you know, your own action plan on disaster risk reduction for your own country to be able to push other actors abroad to espouse your same principles.

So, we've taken the same -- a similar stance on the indicators that we've been looking at and how we've been defining them.

MR. FIGUERES: Thank you. I'm afraid we're going to have to cut this off here, and I want to apologize to some of our colleagues here who have questions pending, but there is a way out for that, if I can see what this is.

Yes, thank you. This is the way out.

So, to begin with, Beth, thank you so much for hosting us here for the global launch of the HRI 2009 and for our working together on this project. Ross, thank you. And Silvia and Philip, thank you for your interventions.

I would like to thank all of you for having given us of your valuable time this afternoon to be able to share the HRI 2009. There is a copy available that you may have seen when you walked in. If you didn't want to pick one up, you may want to pick one up now.

For those of you who have questions that you would like to ask to one of our panelists, there is a reception that we would like to invite all of you to on the second floor. And, of course, you will find a moment there, I hope, to pose the questions that you wanted to share with us this afternoon.

Thank you so very much and good afternoon.

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