



PRESS RELEASE

Kofi Annan launches DARA's 2007 Humanitarian Response Index™

Donor countries' efforts are still not enough to respond to humanitarian needs

Nordic countries, followed closely by the European Commission, are the leading humanitarian donors

Madrid, 29 November 2007 – Sweden is the leading humanitarian donor country, followed by Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and the European Commission, respectively, in DARA's 2007 *Humanitarian Response Index™* (HRI), launched today by former UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan, together with Silvia Hidalgo, Director General of DARA, and Augusto López-Claros, Project Director, at the Royal Society of Arts, London.

"I firmly believe that the Humanitarian Response Index™ will serve as a crucial tool to help ensure that no disaster is ignored, and that every dollar spent helps those most in need," affirms Kofi A. Annan, former UN Secretary-General and currently President of the Geneva-based Global Humanitarian Forum.

The HRI ranks the group of twenty-three OECD/DAC countries that in 2003 in Stockholm, endorsed the *Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship* (GHD), considered to be the international benchmark for best practices in humanitarian action.

Developed by DARA International, a Madrid-based evaluation agency, this Index is the first of its kind worldwide. As a result of the growing number of natural hazards and conflicts, humanitarian aid has increased significantly, thereby constituting an increasingly important component of international aid. Emergencies will continue to augment and humanitarian aid will be ever more needed. In 2006, the number of natural hazards affected over 130 million people and caused the death of more than 20,000; and the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) amounted to 24.5 million. Therefore, donor funding allocated to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and man-made crises is expected to rise in coming years, both in absolute terms and in relation to overall development aid. Climate change and other man-made crises are highly likely, unfortunately, to deliver a steady stream of disasters which will require quick, generous, and effective responses.

As an independent, non-profit organisation, DARA embarked on creating its Humanitarian Response Index to help track the progress of donors toward the benchmark in order to improve

their ability to alleviate human suffering in crisis situations through improved humanitarian aid delivery, thus increasing the quality of humanitarian action. The HRI offers detailed information about the reality of the assistance, allowing for analyses of donor strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately, helping establish a more effective, responsible and transparent design and implementation of future strategies. The HRI is a new instrument that will complement the voluntary commitment donors have made to the *GHD Principles*.

“This Index tries to give a voice to the millions of people affected by crises that are the recipients and intended clients of aid but have little to say in what they are to receive, if they are fortunate enough to receive aid at all. Now, more than ever, it is essential for donors to improve the efficiency of their humanitarian actions as laid out in the GHD Principles. The HRI establishes a practical framework for assessing donor performance. It is not meant as a ‘name and shame’ exercise, but rather as a vehicle providing the tools to improve the quality of humanitarian aid. We very much hope that, over time, it will be seen as an important contribution to this debate,” explains Silvia Hidalgo, Director General of DARA.

METHODOLOGY

The rankings are put together from a combination of hard data, and the results of a comprehensive survey conducted by DARA in selected humanitarian crisis countries to gauge the views of implementing agencies about donors’ commitment to good practice in humanitarian action. This year, over 800 humanitarian actors were polled in **eight crisis-torn countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, including Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor, Haiti, Lebanon, Niger, Pakistan, and Sudan**. Additionally, a questionnaire was presented to all the analysed donors and 20 of the 23 DAC members were interviewed in person. The survey questionnaire is designed to capture a broad range of factors pertaining to how well donors are doing in sticking to the letter of the *GHD Principles* they endorsed. For example, it assesses whether donors’ objectives are consistent with the humanitarian principles of saving lives, alleviating suffering, and maintaining human dignity; whether their funding decisions are swayed by political, economic, military or other strategic considerations; whether they work effectively with other humanitarian partners, and how actively they are engaged in integrating their relief efforts with broader development objectives.

THE RANKING

“Nordic countries present better models for providing humanitarian aid. Sweden is a real example of how effective humanitarian response can save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity, especially due to its focus on covering humanitarian needs across the globe, the heart of good humanitarian donorship. The top donors in our HRI are also able to cooperate effectively with other humanitarian actors, supporting and facilitating international coordination efforts and providing strong financial backing to organisations to improve response. Many have adopted humanitarian policies that are firmly based on the Stockholm Principles, the challenge lies in operationalising these principles in practice,” said Augusto Lopez-Claros, Project Director of the HRI.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX RANKINGS 2007		
Donor	HRI rankings	HRI scores*
Sweden	1	5,37
Norway	2	5,13
Denmark	3	5,02
Netherlands	4	5,00
European Commission	5	4,91
Ireland	6	4,86
New Zealand	7	4,80
Canada	8	4,79
United Kingdom	9	4,76
Switzerland	10	4,66
Finland	11	4,58
Luxembourg	12	4,51
Germany	13	4,45
Australia	14	4,44
Belgium	15	4,42
United States	16	4,39
Spain	17	4,28
Japan	18	4,19
France	19	4,05
Austria	20	4,01
Portugal	21	3,96
Italy	22	3,85
Greece	23	3,17

* Scores range from 1 to a maximum of 7

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

- Sweden** is the best ranking country in the Humanitarian Response Index™ (HRI). Its outstanding performance is backed by both hard and soft data variables and it scores well across all indicators. Among those indicators which capture the quality of responses to humanitarian needs, Sweden's strong ranking comes from a distribution of funding that is more focused on forgotten emergencies and on those sectors that typically receive low-profile media coverage than any other donor. In the same way, Sweden excels in providing the vast majority of its humanitarian assistance in the form of cash and in responding in a timely manner to complex emergencies. Its ability to deliver on its commitment to the basic principles of humanitarian action is boosted by their incorporation into its GHD-based humanitarian aid policy. For those factors which assess the ability of the donor to work with other humanitarian partners, Sweden unambiguously establishes itself as the foremost multilateralist in humanitarian action, strongly supportive of international coordination efforts and their multilateral partners. Sweden also has an excellent record in implementing the core instruments of international humanitarian law and human rights. It also places a strict limit on the funding that can be channelled to projects implemented by the military.

- **Norway** (2), **Denmark** (3) and the **Netherlands** (4) all follow closely on the heels of Sweden. As humanitarian donors, these countries share many characteristics with the top performer. They all do commendably well in responding to humanitarian needs, ensuring that their funding also reaches forgotten emergencies and providing flexible and unearmarked funding that can be rapidly disbursed. Like Sweden, these countries are multilateralists, all supporting international coordination efforts, funding multilateral mechanisms and appeals and promoting the role of NGOs.
- In fifth place overall, the **European Commission** sets the standard in the area of learning and accountability, where it is perceived to be strongly supportive of accountability in humanitarian action and of encouraging regular evaluations. This is strongly backed by the hard data variables capturing membership of, attendance at, and funding of the main accountability initiatives and the number of evaluations, indicators for which it performs better than all other donors. It also does particularly well in engaging at the local level, receiving a high score for consultation with beneficiaries on monitoring and evaluation and for supporting effective coordination efforts. The EC's wider engagement with civil society is also shown by its excellent ranking for promoting the role of NGOs under its framework partnership agreement. Nevertheless, the EC has had limited success fostering the transition from emergency aid to rehabilitation and development, despite its mandate to promote this area. A key characteristic of the EC's humanitarian aid is its lack of flexibility and its multilateralist engagement is limited, although improving.
- **Canada** comes 7th in the HRI, performing particularly well in those factors which assess the integration of relief with development, implementing international guiding principles, and promoting learning and accountability. Canada also excels in other areas, with top-five ranks in funding allocations for priority sectors, in funding which is allocated to the most needy and vulnerable countries, in the predictability of its funding allocations to key humanitarian partners and in delivering funds which, on the whole, are not subject to rigid earmarking constraints. Among its weakness are funding allocations driven by media coverage and too often bypassing forgotten emergencies.
- The **United Kingdom**, known as a driving force for promoting change and reform within the humanitarian system, achieves a respectable 9th place in the Index. The UK's strengths lie in the pillars pertaining to working with humanitarian partners, where it stands out for its very generous funding to multilateral organisations and their appeals, as well as for promoting learning and accountability. It is also perceived to be doing well at providing predictable funding, introducing longer-term funding arrangements, as well as facilitating safe humanitarian access, and supporting contingency planning and capacity building efforts. The UK obtains its lowest ranking in those variables which capture the implementation of international guiding principles, mainly because it has done less than other peer countries in implementing core legal instruments related to international humanitarian law and human rights. However, it also receives relatively low ranks for enhancing security, protecting human rights, and affirming the primary role of civilian organisations.
- **Germany** ranks 13th in the HRI this year. Its strengths lie in the areas of promoting the role of and funding NGOs, which receive a large share of German aid, making resources available to humanitarian partners in a predictable fashion and supporting various accountability initiatives. Germany has also performed well in implementing international humanitarian law and affirming the primary position of civilian organisations in delivering humanitarian assistance. Its weaknesses lie, in part, in tailoring its response to needs, where it does not succeed in providing timely assistance to complex emergencies. It is also not much of a multilateral player, providing funding to UN coordination mechanisms, multilateral organisations' appeals, and various international emergency response mechanisms that is well below its fair share.

- The **United States** is 16th among the 23 OECD-DAC countries in the overall ranking. It does well in supporting and funding accountability in humanitarian action and encouraging regular evaluations. However, it performs poorly in the area of implementing international guiding principles and in responding to humanitarian needs. For example, the U.S. receives some of the lowest rankings for perceptions about its respect for basic humanitarian principles: alleviation of suffering, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. On the other hand, it does rather well in distributing its funding based on identified needs. It also receives overall endorsement for consultation with beneficiaries on monitoring and evaluation, strengthening preparedness for emergencies, and supporting rapid recovery of sustainable livelihoods, all suggesting a solid performance in support of civil society initiatives. It also receives high ranks for donor preparedness in implementing humanitarian action and in facilitating safe humanitarian access.
- **Spain** has an overall rank of 17th in the HRI. It has a good score for allocating its funding to emergencies that are either forgotten or that receive low media coverage. Spain also does well in those factors which capture the implementation of international guiding principles, achieving a rank of 6th overall in this component of the HRI. On the whole, however, it does not score particularly well on other components of the Index, mainly due to its failure to fund priority sectors and vulnerable countries and to free itself from its historical legacy. Spain's rank reflects uniformly low scores on the survey.
- **Japan's** 18th place overall in the HRI betrays its good performance in tailoring its humanitarian response to needs, where it obtains 7th place. It distributes its humanitarian funding equitably without regard for historical ties and geographic proximity and stands out for providing timely funding to onset disasters and priority sectors. Japan is also a key player in funding disaster risk reduction initiatives, but relative to its economic size, falls generally short of funding its fair share in multilateral appeals. Its other weaknesses include a failure to provide flexible, unearmarked funding, as well as a failure to promote NGOs, to provide funding to strengthen capacity, and to promote learning and accountability initiatives and regular evaluations. Its funding decisions, likewise, are generally swayed by such considerations as media-coverage, with relatively little funding allocated to forgotten emergencies.
- **France** comes in 19th place in the HRI. Its strengths are in the implementation of international guiding principles, due to its support for international humanitarian law and the principal legal instruments on human rights. However, its humanitarian assistance is not sufficiently independent from considerations of historical ties and flows unevenly to crises with high media coverage, without reaching forgotten emergencies. France also does not do well in integrating relief and development and is not particularly generous in funding various multilateral mechanisms which have been established to enhance capacity for crises prevention and recovery.



DARA (Development Assistance Research Associates) is an independent non-profit organisation committed to the quality of humanitarian action and development aid through evaluation and research. With its work, DARA contributes to improving the effectiveness of aid responses and global efforts to reduce human suffering, vulnerability and poverty. As part of its mandate, DARA also strives to promote a forward looking and action-oriented, inclusive evaluation culture focused on dissemination and knowledge management as an integral part of the evaluation process.

DARA has participated in the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) <http://www.tsunami-evaluation.org/> and is Full Member of ALNAP <http://www.alnap.org/>.

www.daraint.org

Notes (all documents will be available as of 29 November, 10.30 AM GMT)

- To download the full rankings: http://www.daraint.org/web_en/hri_en.html
- For all country profiles: http://www.daraint.org/web_en/hri_en.html
- For the Principles and Good Practices of Humanitarian Donorship (GHD): http://www.daraint.org/web_en/hriGoodDonorship.html
- Frequently Asked Questions: http://www.daraint.org/web_en/hriQuestions.html
- Web editors, please cross-link to our special page on the Humanitarian Response Index™ at http://www.daraint.org/web_en/hri_en.html
- The Report, published by Palgrave Macmillan, can be ordered online at www.palgrave.com, by telephone at +44 (0)1256 302688, by fax at +44 (0)1256 330688 or by e-mail at orders@palgrave.com

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