FINAL DRAFT VERSION

From humanitarian aid to humanitarian politics

Myths and realities of humanitarian aid

BY

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This book contains a number of reflections as a result of some thirteen years working in humanitarian aid in the field since 1987 to the present date. Past experience includes work for the Red Cross (ICRC 1987-1990 Nicaragua and Mozambique, IFRC 1992 Zambia), the United Nations in Africa (UNDP/WFP 1990-91 Mozambique, UNDHA 1994-95 Great Lakes), and since 1995 a number of consultancies in Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean, and Europe (Great Lakes, Central America, Peru, Ecuador, Jamaica, Barbados, Bosnia) for ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Office), CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, part of the Louvain's Catholic University), IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross).

This book represents essentially my thoughts and beliefs. It is not an "academic" book in that the contents are more the result of experience than research. My personal belief is that humanitarian aid is something essentially practical, not theoretical. But obviously it also needs some conceptual framework in which to ascribe its actions. The wording has been kept as simple as possible in order to avoid confusion and allow for easy reading. Sometimes technical jargon is difficult to understand.

Humanitarian aid is something intrinsically valuable which must be maintained. But it is something that few people know about, and much less understand. The widespread feeling among the general public is that humanitarian aid saves lives. But not many know how difficult and complex the humanitarian world is.

The book attempts to present a vision of current humanitarian aid as complete as possible, from a practitioner's point of view. It does not cover the history of humanitarian aid, nor does it provide a ranking or appraisal of all UN agencies, NGOs, Red Cross or donors professionalism in action. While it is not a practical guide for those working in humanitarian aid, it does address some key issues and provides some suggestions on a number of problems which humanitarian aid must face, much of which depends more on common sense than scientific knowledge or academic theory. For a number of people already working in humanitarian aid, examples and situations will be familiar. At the same time, I hope that the general public will find this book of interest because it deals as clearly and simply as possible with real case situations, in which I have most often been involved. Having an insider's view from three different perspectives based on previous experience (Red Cross, UN and donor), I have tried to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the system taking the existing constraints into consideration.

A first version of this book was prepared in February 1998, which contained most of chapters one through four and the Burundi case study. Chapters five and six were added in the course of the past year, chapter five given my involvement with hurricane Mitch and the IDNDR conferences and chapter six as a result of my personal thought process. I came to realize that evaluations, or technical appraisal of projects and activities, are by no means a guarantee that adequate professional decisions will subsequently be taken. Decisions on aid projects are taken as a part of the political process, never solely according to the "technical" evaluation. As a result it became clear to me that a technical approach was insufficient, and that the need to apply humanitarian concerns as a result of the technical recommendations justified what I call in this book the creation of "humanitarian politics".

This book is not the usual book on humanitarian aid, nor is it meant as an "expert's book". It does not rest up so much upon what others have written and think about humanitarian aid, but it presents a critical vision of the current humanitarian world. I believe it could be called "constructive criticism", as the book makes many practical suggestions and recommendations on a number of issues.

Today economy, finance and telecommunication have all gone global. We are going towards a global society, in which all people will increasingly resemble a unique model. This makes us impermeable to alternative systems and a differentiated vision. Indeed we start losing our capacity to think, analyze, criticize and chose. This book represents a different, realistic and perhaps hopeful perspective on humanitarian aid. Let the reader decide.

Sitges, August 1999

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AID (U.S.) : United States Agency for International Development
ADFL : Allied Democratic Front for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
BiH : Bosnia and Herzegovina
CERF : Central Emergency Revolving Fund
CDC : Center for Disease Control
CIS : Community of Independent States
CMR : Crude Mortality Rate
CNN : Cable News Network
DAC : Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
D/P : Disaster prevention and preparedness
ECHO : European Community Humanitarian Office
ECLAC : Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EEC : European Economic Community
EU : European Union
FAO : Food and Agriculture Organization
FAR : Forces Armées Ruandaises
FOB : Free On Board
FTS : Financial Tracking System
GDHAC : Gross Domestic Humanitarian Aid Cost
GDP : Gross Domestic Product
GNHAC : Gross National Humanitarian Aid Cost
GNP : Gross National Product
HDI : Human Development Index
HPI : Human Poverty index
HR : Human Rights
ICRC : International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC : International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IDNDR : International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
IDB : Inter-American Development Bank
IFOR : Implementation Force
IHL : International Humanitarian Law
IMF : International Monetary Fund
INGF : International Non-Governmental Federation
MSF : Médecins Sans Frontières
MDM : Médecins Du Monde
NATO : North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO : Non-Governmental Organization
OAS : Organization of American States
OAU : Organization of African Unity
OECD : Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFDA : Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSCE : Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAHO : Pan American Health Organization
QIP : Quick Impact Projects
RRRD : Recovery, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development
RPF : Rwanda Patriotic Front
RS : Republica Srpska
SAF : Structural Adjustment Facility
SAP : Structural Adjustment Program
SCF : Save the Children's Fund
SDR : Swiss Disaster Relief
SFOR : Stabilization Force
SICA : Sistema de Integración Centro-Americano
UN : United Nations
UNHCHR : United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA : United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNICEF : United Nations Children's Fund
UNDHA : United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, now UNOCHA
UNDP : United Nations Development Program
UNSRSG : United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General
UNSG : United Nations Secretary General
UNAMIR : United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda
UNPROFOR : United Nations Protection Force
WB : World Bank
WFP World Food Program
WHO : World Health Organization
WV : World Vision

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CHAPTER ONE : NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF HUMANITARIAN AID

Humanitarian aid. Two fashionable words. Humanitarian aid. More than a concept, an archetype of man's capacity for good.

Humanitarian aid. Starving, malnourished children. Humanitarian aid. An endless flow of despairing and destitute population looking for shelter and security. Humanitarian aid. A war-torn country, devastated cities, crumbling buildings. Humanitarian aid. Wounded and mutilated bodies, rotting corpses. Humanitarian aid. Famine, disasters, war, strife, blood, death. Humanitarian aid. Rape, abuse, degradation, torture, terror. Humanitarian aid. United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Humanitarian Laws. Humanitarian aid. Misery, pain, suffering. The ultimate ordeal. Humanitarian aid. The solution. A goal. An ideal. Perhaps the ultimate ideal.

To address the issue of humanitarian aid is a difficult task. *First, because of the variety of situations in which it is involved*. An earthquake strikes in Armenia on 7 December 1988, wreaking havoc upon the local population : humanitarian aid is urgently required to help locate and rescue any survivor. An armed conflict in Rwanda leads to the overthrow of the government in July 1994 and the exodus of more than two and a half million refugees to neighboring countries : humanitarian aid is urgently needed to assist war victims, providing the basic supplies to ensure human survival. There are abysmal differences between these two examples, yet both share a common denominator : a humanitarian aid intervention has been essential in alleviating human suffering and misery. Thus is humanitarian aid seen as indispensable in cases of natural disasters and man-made disasters alike[1].

Secondly, because of the absence of clear objectives. While the reduction of human misery and suffering is a laudable goal, the manner and extent to which this reduction must be achieved remains vague. It is generally accepted that **survival** of the individual constitutes the primary objective of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid is then expected to "save and/or preserve lives", or in other words, to contain the death toll in a given situation, and, wherever possible, impede unnecessary deaths and abuses (killings, arbitrary executions, beatings, torture, etc.). To contain the death toll is the core activity of humanitarian aid, and it was also one of the aims of one of the first specialized institution to tackle the issue of human survival back in 1863 (the International Committee to bring relief to the wounded, which would later change its name to the International Committee of the Red Cross)[2]. To impede unnecessary deaths and abuses is a fragile and delicate activity undertaken under various labels : "protection" for some, "security" for others, even "peace keeping" or "peace making" in certain cases. This will be looked at after presenting the first objective of humanitarian aid : the issue of human survival.

1. The complex issue of human survival

1.1 Mortality and death toll.

There are several indicators to measure fatality, but the two most widely used in humanitarian aid are the **mortality rate** and the overall **death toll**.

[1] Man-made disasters include all forms of armed conflict as well as technological disasters (i.e. Chernobyl's nuclear incident, chemical disasters, etc.)

[2] M. André DURAND, "The International Committee of the Red Cross", International Review of the Red Cross, March-August 1981, Geneva, p. 6.

The first of these indicators, called crude mortality rate (CMR), is usually expressed as the number of deaths per 1000 people per month in non-refugee populations. However in refugee populations and in emergency and disaster situations, when mortality indices need to be sensitive to frequent changes, mortality rates are more adequately expressed as deaths per 10,000 per day for short intervals and deaths per 1000 per month when considering trends over a 12-month period.[3]
The overall death toll is simply the total number of deaths over a given period. To be valid, the death toll must specify since when the deaths have been recorded, thereby clearly indicating the time period concerned.

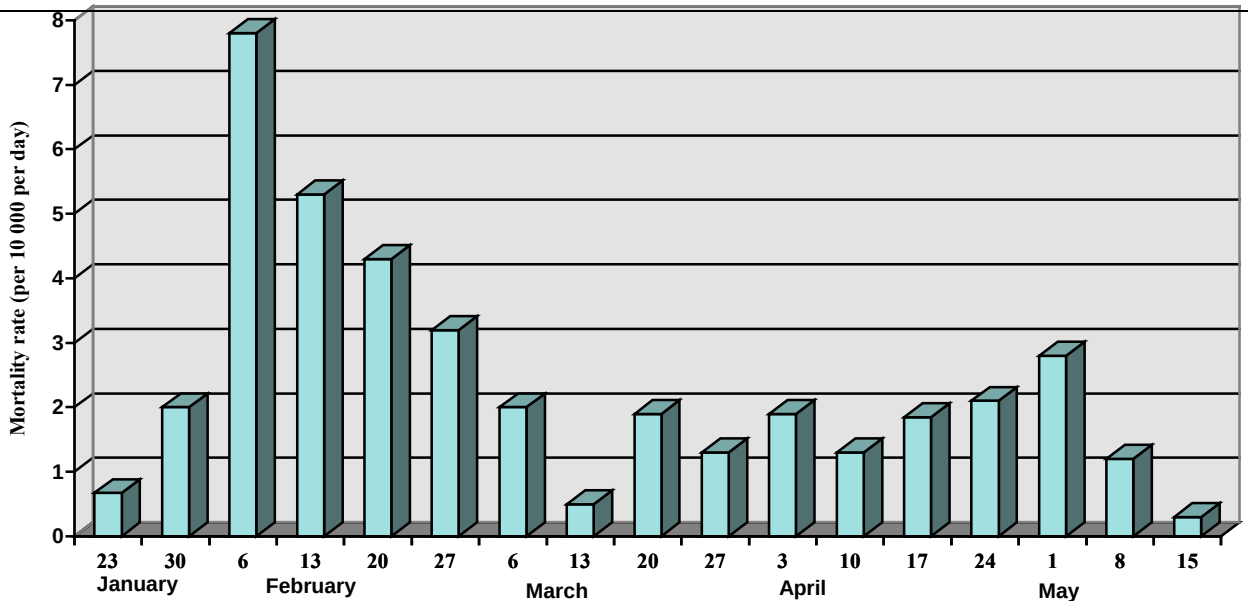
While CMRs are usually trustworthy in "contained" environments, such as in refugee camps, they are often much more difficult to obtain for the population at large (for a number of reasons : lack of an adequate information system, populations inaccessible due to security conditions, political interests in manipulating casualty figures, etc.). As a result mortality rates in an "open" environment in emergency/disaster situations are at best approximations but can rarely be considered precise, unless sufficient means are available to conduct house to house surveys. Conditions may also sharply differ from one geographical region to the next, leading to varying levels of mortality country-wide.

The same limitations obviously apply to the overall death toll. While information from refugee camps can be monitored largely because of the presence of humanitarian aid staff, the death toll of population in "open" environments is much more difficult to assess, and figures should be taken with caution.

Mortality rates and death tolls in refugee camps or other "contained" environment (e.g. reception centers, displaced persons camps) are by no means representative of the rest of the population of that specific region or country. Even in areas were several camps have been established, there can be substantial differences in mortality rates and death toll. Any mortality rate figure and/or death toll count must clearly specify the exact geographical location and perimeter of the camp from which the information has been obtained. Such information should be contrasted/compared with that of the other camps in the region, with that of the region (non-camp population) and/or that of the country, in order to monitor on-going progress and allow if necessary humanitarian aid to review coverage of its activities.

The daily mortality rate tends to be a rapidly increasing and decreasing function in which the largest number of deaths concentrate around a short "peak period", while the overall death toll keeps rising. This phenomenon is well known in contained environments (e.g. refugee camps) when epidemics such as cholera, measles and diarrhea cause quickly a high death rate. The following is an example of average mortality rates due to measles only in Wad Kowli camp, Sudan, by 7-day period, from 23 January to 14 May 1985[4] :

[3] TOOLE, M.J., WALDMAN, R.J.. "An analysis of mortality trends among refugee populations in Somalia, Sudan, and Thailand". WHO Bulletin 1988: 66: p.237-238.
[4] TOOLE, M.J., STEKETEE, R.W., WALDMAN, R.J., NIEBURG, P., "Measles prevention and control in emergency settings", WHO bulletin 1989; 67, p.382.

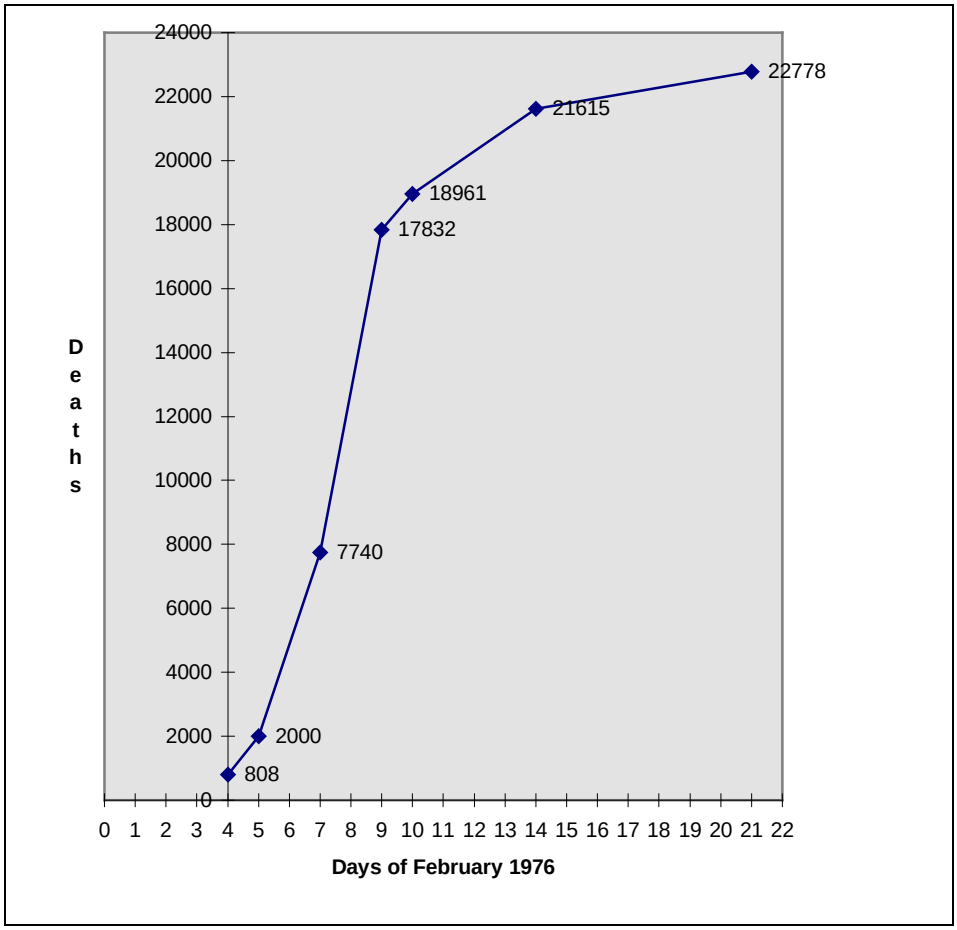


In this case the "peak period" corresponds to the month of February where mortality rates are far above crisis values (of 2 per 10,000 per day)[5].

Clearly timing is essential to reduce mortality in epidemics. Vaccination is extremely efficient and greatly reduces mortality risks, but a vaccination campaign must have been done prior to the outbreak to prove useful. This is turn means implies that adequate resources have been mobilized (cold chain, etc.) **before** the epidemic breaks out. Once the epidemic strikes, vaccination is no longer of any use for the ill. Medical staff will attempt to cure as many ill as possible, but the effectiveness will not be able to match that of preventive measures (vaccination). Said in other words, treating measles is only a second-best choice. Because most infectious diseases are highly lethal (especially among children under five years of age) and spread very rapidly, time plays against humanitarian aid. The quicker and the more prepared the intervention, the more likely it is to reduce mortality rates. Furthermore, in cases of epidemics, **prevention** through vaccination is no doubt the best and most effective humanitarian aid measure which can be taken.

In case of natural disasters the indicator which is normally used is the death toll, or total number of deaths caused by a given disaster (flood, tidal wave, landslide, fire, earthquake, etc.). Hereafter as an example is the death toll from the Guatemala earthquake, 4-21 February 1976[6].

[5] While CMR in developed countries' normal population amounts to 0.27 per 10,000 per day, the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta has suggested that a CMR superior to 1 per 10,000 per day reveals a very serious situation and a CMR superior to 2 per 10,000 per day denotes a crisis out of control. Source : IFRC's "Informe Mundial sobre desastres 1996", Oxford University Press, p. 40.
[6] Source : "Earthquake in Guatemala: Epidemiological evaluation of the relief effort", De Ville de Goyet et al., PAHO Bulletin, Vol. X, No.2, 1976, p. 97.



In this case most casualties occur within hours of the event. It should be noted that "most deaths caused directly by earthquakes are the result of structural collapse".[7] This means that adequate construction engineering techniques and building codes are able to reduce fatality in earthquakes for little added cost[8].

The rise in fatality is not due to secondary effects of the earthquake, but is the delay in obtaining reliable reports from all areas disaster-affected. Thus the 22 778 deaths most likely occurred within the first two days of the earthquake, but almost three weeks were necessary to obtain the total death count. The peak period itself is very short.

In the case of earthquakes, time is even a more important factor for *the first few hours are essential in order to search for and rescue any potential survivor who might remain trapped under crumbled building or houses.*

The following text presents an interesting epidemiological study of disaster relief :

"A Disaster Relief Chronology

[7] Ibid., p. 96

[8] See "Informal Settlements, Environmental Degradation and Disaster Vulnerability - The Turkey case study", edited by R.Parker, A. Kreimer and M. Munasinghe, WB/IDNDR, 1995, especially in chapter 4 "Disaster prevention and mitigation in metropolitan areas : reducing urban vulnerability in Turkey", by A. Coburn for cost-effectiveness examples.

According to Western, the aftermath of a disaster can be conveniently divided into four phases : impact, emergency, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Each of these phases is associated with specific activities, and consequently with specific material and personnel needs.

- The *impact* phase is the period during which deaths, injuries, and destruction are taking place. In Guatemala, the main impact was sudden and very short (about 30 seconds). As is usual in the case of earthquakes, it was followed by frequent after-shocks, some of them strong enough to raise the toll of human injury and death…
- The *emergency* phase is the period during which life-saving measures are taken - including the rescue of buried or trapped persons, the administration of first aid, the provision of emergency medical care for the injured, etc. The emergency phase is often subdivided into two periods, one characterized by isolation and the other by outside rescue and relief measures.
  During the *isolation* period the stricken community is completely on its own. Authorities do not know which areas are most severely affected because communications are cut off. This period ends with the arrival of the first rescue workers from unaffected areas. However, several days are often required to reach remote smaller communities, with the consequences that people are either recovering or dead when medical care becomes available.
  The *rescue and relief* period begins with the arrival of teams, initially uncoordinated but later organized, with relief supplies and medical equipment. This is when the first outside medical treatment is administered to the injured….With regards to assisting victims, the greatest good (or in some cases the greatest harm) is done during this phase. Following the 1972 Nicaragua earthquake, this phase was over after day 5.
- The *rehabilitation* phase has already gotten underway during the emergency phase. In it, priority is shifted to the delivery of essential *routine* services in *temporary* facilities - such as provision of water by tank-trucks and delivery of routine health care in tent hospitals. Emphasis is placed on environment measures, sanitation, and creation of emergency shelters.
- The *reconstruction* phase is the most exacting in terms of resources and efforts needed, and it is the one with least appeal to international solidarity. This phase can provide opportunities for improvement and for reforms aimed at greater preparedness in the event of recurrent disasters. On the other hand, there are cases in which the long-term disruptive effects of a disaster have been allowed to become permanent by loss of interest or lack of external funding during its period". [9]

Although this typology is sector specific and is already over twenty five years old, it is nonetheless useful in evidencing differences between phases, particularly between the initial "impact" and "isolation" periods, from a secondary phase of "emergency", in which "rescue and relief" efforts are being deployed and medical assistance administered.

1.2 Mass casualty incidents : human survival in primary and secondary emergency

[9] De Ville de Goyet et al, "Earthquake in Guatemala: Epidemiological evaluation of the relief effort", op. cit., p. 99 to 102.

"Mass casualty incident…has to deal with a sudden rise in the needs for an effective medical, social, and psychological intervention, exceeding the normal capacities of the local facilities"[10].

In all cases of mass casualty incidents, time is of utmost importance, because the level of medical resources is insufficient to cover the medical needs as a result of the incident. This gives rise to the need of "triage", which prioritizes through a series of brief medical surveys who will obtain the available medical attention, based on injuries received.[11] In other words, "triage" maximizes the efficiency of the medical services rendered through a selection of who will receive what kind of attention. Triage implies that medical resources available, however limited, are known. A humanitarian aid intervention by the French Doctors[12] or similar NGOs in emergency situations can be said to practically always occur under mass casualty incident conditions. In fact, theses NGOs will intervene only when local resources are unable to meet the needs, having normally no interest in duplicating existing structures.

Primary emergency

But the **time factor** is different for external humanitarian aid than it is for local humanitarian aid. When an incident occurs, such as an earthquake, the only existing resources immediately available to mitigate the effects are local resources. Unless foreign NGOs have pre-positioned manpower and material resources nearby, their intervention might often come too late to reduce the death toll in the peak period. As mentioned previously, there can be a significant delay between the time of impact and isolation until the time when the first assistance is received. Said in other words, emergency actions can be divided into two phases: the primary emergency, corresponding to the peak period, where only local copying mechanisms will be able to mitigate the effects of the incident and in which triage is necessary to attempt to contain the death toll, and a secondary emergency, once the need for triage has become unnecessary, often corresponding to the time when outside assistance has started becoming operational, passed the peak period.

It is not possible to determine a precise time-frame for a primary emergency because its duration will depend on the nature of the emergency. For example, in case of an earthquake, survivors may at times be found alive trapped under debris days after the event, whereas such a possibility is non-existent in case of landslides. Nonetheless a primary emergency is obviously a short period during which the overriding objective is to save as many lives as possible. Only a conceptual definition can therefore be suggested to define primary and secondary emergencies. *A primary emergency is the time period starting when a disaster has caused human lives to be lost and/or placed at risk, during which activities are centered around the provision of* ***immediate*** *life-saving services* in order to maximize human survival. *A secondary emergency is the time period when the provision of services are* ***short-term*** *life-saving and/or life-preserving measures*.

There is a notorious difference between the two terms. For example, traditional activities of NGOs in refugee camps include therapeutic feeding (for malnourished children) and sanitation activities. While these activities are indispensable to contain the death toll (malnourished children will die if left days unattended and inadequate

[10] HOOFT, P.J., NOJI, E.K., VAN DE VOORDE, H.P., "Fatality management in mass casualty incidents", Forensic Science International, 40 (1989), 3-14 , p.3.
[11] HOOFT, P.J., "Medical concepts of triage", undated paper. Although triage is essentially used on the basis of injuries and not illness, its principles may apply nevertheless.
[12] Such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Médecins du Monde (MDM), etc.

sanitation presents the risk of a lethal cholera epidemic), they may are not immediately life-saving, unlike a surgical intervention to a seriously wounded person whose life depends on the outcome of the operation. This is not to say that services given in secondary emergency are not worthwhile; they clearly are just as necessary and valuable. But the perspective with which attention is given shifts from immediate life-saving activities to short-term life-saving and/or life-preserving activities, ideally including prevention (such as vaccination campaigns) and preparedness. And this can only be done once all immediate life-saving services - which are the priority- have been satisfied. In other words, foreign assistance in humanitarian aid often takes place in "relative emergency" situations, in which services provided are mostly of a secondary emergency nature (life-saving and life-preserving) in a short term perspective, but not as immediately vital as those necessary in the primary emergency phase (life-saving only) where lack of attention will directly translate into a higher death toll.
It can be said that humanitarian aid has only an *ex post* effect on mortality in disaster situations, not being able in most cases to intervene sooner.

As regards to triage it is rarely done by foreign medical NGOs. A possible reason could be that NGO resources are not fixed (manpower, material, logistics) but are likely to increase according to funding received, itself in turn related to media coverage of the operation. *However, triage remains an integral part of the initial response in the primary emergency phase of any mass casualty incident.*

From what has been explained above, some conclusions about humanitarian aid in natural disasters and epidemics situation can now be drawn :

1) that **prevention** is the most effective and cheapest measure which can be taken to save lives. In case of natural disasters, reforestation activities may play a decisive role against flooding, the same as the use of adequate building materials can be effective against earthquakes. In case of epidemics nothing can match effectiveness of an adequate vaccination campaign,
2) that **local** humanitarian aid is the only help immediately available to those in need,
3) that **external** humanitarian aid, while extremely valuable and equally life-saving, is nonetheless an *ex post* intervention which cannot save those initially most affected by disaster. By the time external humanitarian aid is operational, the most affected will have died.

In armed conflicts, mortality rates/death toll also depend on the intensity of military operations and of their consequences, and rise proportionally with bellicose activities. Mortality peak period rates resulting from combat casualties among combatants and (mostly civilian) population[13] could therefore be considered likely to correspond to periods of high-intensity military activities. Further research should be made to determine whether the existence of short-term mortality peak periods can be seen to apply in the case of armed conflicts. There has apparently not been any study to that effect, but the little data available does not allow to draw any conclusion, since both short and longer-term peak periods (spreading over several weeks) exist. For example, in Rwanda in April of 1994, a few hours after the president's plane was taken down, the first series of killings against tutsis and hutu moderates was started, initiating a peak period which lasted until June (earlier in the eastern part of the country, due to the RPF[14] offensive). The killings lasted for more than 12 weeks in some areas and the exact death toll is anyone's guess between the

[13] the inclusion of civilian casualties is a must : according to the United Nations, at the turn of the century, some 90% of the war victims were soldiers, against 90% of civilian victims today. Source : UNDP "Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1994", Economica, Paris, 1994, p. 50.
[14] Rwanda Patriotic Front, a mainly tutsi armed group supported by Uganda.

incredible figure of 500,000 to 1,000,000 individuals. Although the intensity of the killings on a daily basis is not known (number of casualties/day), there has been clear evidence that massacres started already merely a few hours after the president was killed on April 6, 1994, in different geographical locations, which shows that these killings had been prepared well in advance, and that in June 94 massacres were still on-going in different parts of the country[15]. In October 1997 in Algeria, despite efforts by the government to divert the attention of the international press, there were reports of almost daily massacres, and killings were regularly reported throughout 1998 and in 1999.

Secondary emergency

In cases of camps or centers where refugees or displaced populations are traditionally attended by NGOs and other specialized agencies, one must realize two things :

a) First, that only the strongest have been able to arrive where basic services and assistance can be provided. For one refugee entering a camp, how many others have failed to arrive and have perished in the attempt? Casualty figures of vulnerable people which have not been able to reach the (relative) safety of an organized camp, while dying in the attempt, will certainly remain unknown.

The most seriously wounded and ill very rarely are able to obtain timely medical care because NGOs are not present where disaster strikes, nor are they normally allowed to be present on the front lines (although they may come very close to it at times). *So, despite its efforts, humanitarian aid incidence on the overall death toll is relative, being applied essentially in secondary emergency situations*. But because realistic figures for the population at large are so difficult to obtain, verify and monitor, as already mentioned, humanitarian aid can focus its efforts on reducing the death toll and mortality rates most effectively in those camps or centers where NGOs and specialized agencies are present and where mortality data can be reliably obtained and monitored. In other words, the impact of humanitarian aid is essentially limited to specific geographical areas with specific conditions. Humanitarian aid by essence uses a targeted approach to reach the most vulnerable people in crisis situations, provided victims are accessible and relative security of humanitarian aid staff is ensured.

b) Second, that population arriving at camps or centers may be often looking as much for shelter and security (if not more) as for material assistance. The presence of foreign NGOs might appease fears of the affected population and may generate an impression of relative security. In this case, the NGO presence might act as an additional incentive for people to arrive at camps/centers, notwithstanding their specific levels of medical and material needs. In other words, people might deliberately chose to flock to a camp or center for security reasons, rather than for other forms of humanitarian aid. This “pull-in” factor must be analyzed in light of the second part of the objective of humanitarian aid, since it is related to the issue of protection and security.

1.3 Prevention and preparedness capacity building as a means to stimulate and empower local response in emergency situations.

To summarize the issue of human survival, humanitarian aid must therefore concentrate efforts on both factors : a) minimizing the daily mortality rate, as well as

[15] African Rights, “Rwanda : Death Despair and Defiance”, African Rights, London, 1994.

b) keeping the overall death toll as low as possible. *However given the urgency which is characteristic of emergency life-saving situations, in which many times external humanitarian assistance is not yet available, these objectives will only be reached when and if local copying mechanisms have been developed in order to be immediately effective in the primary emergency phase*. The reduction in mortality rates and death toll as a result of an external humanitarian aid intervention will consequently be more effective in controlled environments such as refugee camps, transit centers or displaced populations camps, in a secondary emergency phase.

This is not to condemn external humanitarian aid, because extremely valuable work has been done in many interventions, and tens of thousands of lives have indeed been saved, even if in a secondary emergency phase. This serves only as a reminder of some of the limits of external humanitarian aid, and the need to support and foment as much as possible local solutions, as a priority always best suited to deal with the situation. Ideally, external humanitarian aid should be the exception, never the rule, and any campaign to present external humanitarian aid as the best solution in emergencies should be avoided : it is not.

It has been said previously that another objective of humanitarian aid is also, wherever possible, to avoid unnecessary deaths and abuses such as killings and arbitrary executions. If this is the case, then humanitarian aid must not only provide basic life-saving services but must equally provide protection and security to at risk populations in order to preserve their lives. The scope of humanitarian aid thus widens and its responsibilities increase enormously.

2. Protection and security in humanitarian aid

What is the difference between “protection” and “security”? Protection is providing the necessary security, or safety, to a person in a threatening environment (real or perceived as such). Threats can be physical or mental (psychological). Security is a synonym of safety. A person may feel safe either through protection or in absence of a threatening environment. For example, most people in their homes in industrialized countries feel safe without requiring any kind of specific protection. On the other hand, many political leaders rely on bodyguards to keep them from any potential harm or injury. But what kind of security can humanitarian aid provide? Ideally protection is keeping someone from both physical or mental harm. Can this be achieved in practice and what are the means that humanitarian aid has at its disposal? This point must be looked at in order to identify the most adequate measures which can be used for protection.

2.1 Unarmed protection

A. Protection and the non-governmental, specialized and UN organizations

The single most effective means to ensure protection for these organizations is their presence among the population at risk. When and where this is possible, such as in refugee camps, their presence serves decisively as dissuasion. In front of foreign undesired eyes, the levels of abuse will drop, even if it will not altogether disappear. These organizations are witnesses of abuse and their presence gives them credibility as possessing first hand information on events. This, in turn, grants them access to donors, embassies, and the international media. No country or warring faction is keen about reading of their own crimes as reported by NGOs in the press, knowing full well the negative repercussions media coverage can entail.

The mere presence of these organizations is not enough to ensure total safety, but experience has proven that their presence undoubtedly enhances the level of protection among the population. However positive, protection is limited. In recent experiences (Eastern Zaire March/April 1997), we have seen how easily humanitarian organizations can be prevented from accessing the geographical area where executions and other abuses are taking place, given alleged lack of security for humanitarian aid workers.

At the same time, the presence of humanitarian aid staff in camps can convey an important risk. The humanitarian aid banner does not make its staff invulnerable. In recent years, numbers of humanitarian aid workers killed in the course of a mission have sharply increased as well as number of threats, kidnapping and injuries suffered by humanitarian aid staff. This obliges humanitarian aid workers to be more aware of the numerous risks and limits of their mission.

In 1996 three ICRC staff were killed in Burundi, and an additional six Red Cross staff were killed in Chechnya (December 1996).
In 1997 according to UNOCHA no less than 25 employees of humanitarian aid organizations were killed[16], not including the ten local Red Cross volunteers killed in Kenge (Zaïre) in May 1997, which brings the total death count to 35 people. 14 were killed in Rwanda. And these figures do not include the kidnappings and threats, such as that of five United Nations and European Union workers kidnapped in Somalia in November 1997.
In 1998 an ICRC staff (from Canadian Red Cross) was killed in Sierra Leone in March, three aid workers (two from WFP) were killed in Sudan in June and another three aid workers in Kosovo in August 1998. In the first quarter of 1999 two aid workers were killed in Somalia in separate incidents. And the list will no doubt continue.

This is not a casual result. Higher risk exposure of humanitarian aid on the field is the consequence of several factors, related to the changing perception of what humanitarian aid is. It has been said previously that NGO presence in camps can be a “pull-in” factor for refugees, looking more towards a secure environment than material assistance. In the eighties, humanitarian aid and humanitarian aid staff were more respected and were better considered than today. The staff felt safer, and more rarely was a humanitarian aid worker placed at risk. Humanitarian aid was widely regarded as neutral and humanitarian aid staff held a special status of unbiased assistance to the most vulnerable population. Even where this was not wholly the case (as in Salvadoran camps in Honduras), there was a certain gentleman’s agreement, or code of honor, which ensured the respect of humanitarian aid staff. “The type of conflict that has characterized the post Cold War has challenged that assumption (neutrality). Aid, in many conflicts, has become a valuable weapon. … The result has been a significant change in the obstacles that humanitarian workers face. Once seen as above the conflict, they now can find themselves part of it”[17].
By and large humanitarian aid was left outside world geopolitics and neither the eastern nor the western blocks used it as an instrument of foreign policy. This *status quo* which favored independence and credibility of humanitarian aid only lasted until the end of the cold war. At the time when the ex-USSR started disintegrating, new types of conflicts were emerging, following different patterns. New political and

[16] UNOCHA Chronology of Humanitarian Workers killed in 1997, see www.reliefweb.int
[17] DAC, Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation, Report No 1., “Civilian and military means of providing and supporting humanitarian assistance during conflict - comparative advantages and costs-“, OECD, 1998, p. 12.

military groups sprang up, under no direct control of any major world power. So-called "internal" conflicts (i.e. which do not involve more than one state) multiplied, and human suffering increased in line with renewed conflicts worldwide. As a consequence new demands were placed on humanitarian aid. "Traditional state armies have been replaced by militias and factions as the principal actors in conflict. The increased complexity and decreased discipline and accountability that have come with this shift have made aid delivery even more difficult".[18]

The world's richest governments[19] and the only remaining "superpower", the United States, proved as incapable as unwilling to effectively identify solutions for these new conflicts. The various options tried out with little success in the past ten years evolved essentially around two axes : one politico-humanitarian, the other a politico-military. Politico-humanitarian aid operations began thus to be the "flavour of the day" for crisis situations, obtaining unprecedented funding allocations, as no alternative to humanitarian aid seemed to emerge for conflict mitigation. But at the same time further burden was thus placed on the shoulders of humanitarian aid, and its responsibility seemed to extend beyond life-saving and passive protection into political governance and active protection. When governments realised the limits of humanitarian aid and its incapacity to meet all challenges stretching far beyond its objectives, military support was sent in to hopefully fill the gaps left by humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid thus entered fully into the world of politics, and was renamed humanitarian intervention. Peace keeping and peace making became other players of humanitarian aid to which it was associated in order to create "humanitarian interventions".

After the Gulf War in the early nineties an unusual optimism ranged in Western countries, certain of their uncontested power and importance over the rest of the world. This coincided with new legislation concerning humanitarian aid. In April 1991 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 688 which justified assistance to the Kurds in the aftermath of the Gulf War. To some this was the institutionalization by the United Nations of "humanitarian intervention"[20], which allows an armed intervention from a state into the territory of another state to end massive and blatant violations of human rights. The Right of Interference (Droit d'ingérence), defended by French Minister Bernard Kouchner on the basis of key-founder professor Mario Bettati's concept, became a reality in 1992, when the United Nations endorsed a humanitarian intervention in Somalia. This seemed to announce the beginning of a new era of respect for human rights, an era in which countries could no longer perpetrate human rights violation in all impunity, hidden behind international law's recognized "national sovereignty" concept.

[18] Ibid., p. 12.

[19] The term "international community" is often used in humanitarian aid or development literature. This allows to dilute responsibilities among the different countries by invoking a moral entity which does not exist. Theoretically it is meant to represent the whole of civil society, public opinion, governments, NGOs, etc. In reality it designates essentially the governments of the richest countries -OECD members- which fund humanitarian operations in addition to Russia and China -as members of the UN Security Council for political reasons only and not for their contribution to humanitarian operations. Obviously even if the so-called international community is reduced to such a group it is far from adopting a common position on foreign policy issues. "International community" is thus only an excuse not to point the finger directly at specific governments -mainly those of our western countries- which are unwilling to effectively tackle the problem. Void of any meaning, this term remains "politically correct" and widely used.

[20] A. O. Abdallah, "La diplomatie pyromane", Calmann-Lévy, 1996, p. 85.

Unfortunately such an optimism has fallen as quickly as it had risen. Not only have the costs of such operations been an economic aberration, but worse, results have fallen so short of the mark that adequacy of "humanitarian interventions" have legitimately been questioned. Although history repeats itself, in the Eastern Zaire crisis in 1997 and despite calls to the opposite, no humanitarian intervention took place, only desperate humanitarian aid attempts, with limited success.

The introduction of military and armed forces in humanitarian interventions has deeply hurt the credibility of humanitarian aid. Somalia has been the first example where even hard-line humanitarian aid organizations opposing the use of armed forces had to give in. For the first time, even organizations such as the ICRC had to hire armed guards and escorts for their protection. This however did not impede "contracts" on specifically targeted humanitarian aid workers, most of whom were threatened and some even assassinated. For the Somali, humanitarian aid was not neutral : it went to population belonging to specific clans, the armed guards and escorts paid by the humanitarian aid organization also belonged to a specific clan, thus creating a feeling that some warlords had gained the lion's share through the presence of humanitarian aid. "In Somalia, aid was a valued commodity and the warring factions often made its capture a principal goal of military undertakings".[21] Subsequent uses of armed forces in humanitarian interventions (ex-Yugoslavia, Rwanda) only contributed to lower the credibility of humanitarian aid operations and increase its politicization.

Protection then remains a difficult and relative concept : how can humanitarian aid organizations provide security to local populations when they are not equipped nor prepared to protect themselves? The answer might be two-fold : on the one hand, it is illusory to imagine that total protection can be granted to any group of people. The only way to achieve this would be to physically isolate the whole group from a threatening environment. But this is only a temporary solution, which in many cases cannot realistically be implemented. So in the end the degree of protection will ultimately depend on the will of those who hold power not to commit abuse. Protection may thus consist in convincing the powerful to refrain from abuses, and this can be a very difficult task requiring many talents of persuasion and diplomacy. In many cases it implies showing the negative consequences that such abuses would bring upon the perpetrators. Negotiations involve a mix of charm, seduction and "soft" threats (i.e. denouncing abuses to the media, major donors and governments). In any case, protection is a very difficult activity, the results of which are always relative. If to a lesser extent, the same applies to humanitarian aid staff : their protection is equally relative. So in the end, humanitarian organizations should always be well aware of the risks involved in their activity. If they become systematic targets of ransom, pilferage, extortion, blackmail and other criminal activities (as in Somalia), their presence is not desired for the life-saving or life-preserving assistance it brings but for the political and economic benefits that can be reaped from it in extreme circumstances. In this case, humanitarian aid should really question the legitimacy of its operation, having eventually to suspend operations or withdraw until it can again operate under acceptable conditions. Going back in time, if humanitarian aid could be started again in Somalia from scratch, it is doubtful that things would be done in the same way again. Although humanitarian aid may not solve the root causes of conflicts, it must contribute to establishing conditions conducive to a durable solution to a crisis. A durable solution to a crisis cannot be found without a firm commitment to a negotiated political settlement. And this should start by the recognition that humanitarian assistance must be allowed to be fully operational without hindrance or threats from any of the parties involved. If this is not

[21] DAC, Report No. 1., op. cit., p. 12

the case, operations should be suspended until conditions are ripe for the continuation of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance must not be so proud as to believe that its activities *must* be undertaken under any condition. To attempt to provide humanitarian aid using force is simply a folly, which in no way contributes to a durable solution to the crisis. Humanitarian organizations should be honest enough to accept that in situations where they are being used, temporary withdrawal may simply be the only viable solution.

B. Protection and major donors and governments

Among donors and governments, protection is not an operative criteria, the way it is for exposed humanitarian organizations working on the ground. As such, protection becomes a part of the political strategy that each government plays out within the region. Protection is thus linked with peace keeping, armed forces, human rights, and becomes an additional element within a country's global strategy of foreign policy and alliances. In some cases where the donor is not representing any specific government (i.e. ECHO, European Commission Humanitarian Office), protection is not placed under its non-political mandate, and military or armed forces intervention are not financed by it[22], but only humanitarian aid activities.

2.2 Armed protection

A. peace making

Recognizing the limitations of *dissuasive protection,* which is normally the only form of security humanitarian organizations are able to provide[23], a number of donors countries have advocated for a stronger, more efficient form of protection, in order to impose peace and guarantee the security of the population. The means to "maintain or restore international peace and security" , in conformity with article 42 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, includes the use of air, sea, or land forces.

The first objective, imposing peace, has hardly proved a success for the world's richest and most powerful governments. In countries such as the ex-Yugoslavia, unstable peace has only been achieved after threats, sanctions and political pressures of all types have been applied at all levels, not merely given the presence of an international force, and this only after repeated, blatant and widespread abuse and exaction were committed by all warring factions. In Rwanda, the UNAMIR presence served of nothing in impeding what the United Nations have labeled as the second "genocide" of the century. It was so overwhelmed and ineffective that in the later stages of the crisis the French mounted "Opération Turquoise", the protected South-western area of Rwanda where routed Hutus could retreat and be safe from the RPF offensive. In Somalia, achieving peace proved impossible, the world's richest governments not knowing with whom to negotiate and failing to adapt to the context.

The second objective, to protect the population, meets the same limitations as humanitarian aid : protection is only effective in the geographical locations where armed soldiers are present. And even then, protection is only partly effective : remember the images on CNN of a Somali woman who, accused of fornicating with strangers, was beaten and stripped naked by a crowd right in front of uncaring soldiers of Operation Restore Hope? Obviously the credibility of peace making has

[22] Except for specific technical activities such as de-mining

[23] There are some exceptions. UNHCR has had more than once to hire armed guards to protect the camp population -both from without and from within-.

sharply dropped after several episodes, the most sadly famous being the UN safe havens (or protected enclaves) in Bosnia. The widows of Srebrenica remember the meaning of international protection, while three years later their husband's remains were being identified by international experts[24]. In Kosovo in spring 1999 the NATO offensive has caused an exodus of nearly one million people and an unspecified number of casualties among those people it was supposed to protect (the so-called "collateral damages").The effectiveness of protecting the population in the Kosovo example is particularly questionable, since some begin to suspect the NATO offensive may have contributed to increased exactions and killings against the albanokosovar population of Kosovo.

B. Peace keeping

If imposing peace has proved a nightmare, peace keeping has equally shown the limits of providing protection. The use of armed forces in peace keeping could show a lack of understanding and an unclear vision as to the root causes of conflicts. To maintain peace through the deployment of armed forces, either as dissuasion against recrudescence of hostilities or with an active international mandate to enforce peace (non-consensual forceful implementation under UN Chapter VII), could well be a false belief that the presence of international troops superior in training and equipment is enough to oblige opposing parties to find a common agreement. But what does peace keeping have to offer to the warring factions?

Four years after signing the Dayton peace agreement in Bosnia, international armed forces remain stationed in the country for peace keeping purposes,

Four years after signing the Dayton peace agreement, the presence of international armed forces, due to have left by July 1998, has been extended to avoid the country's slipping back into war. In July 1999 a new extension will likely occur. In September 1998 the elections in the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republica Srpska) were won by the ultra-nationalist candidate, when all most governments were actively supporting the moderate pro-western candidate. So in fact peace making becomes "war avoiding".
In March 1999, a new crisis erupted as a result of the decision on the status of Brcko and the ensuing destitution of the ultra-nationalist president of the Republica Srpska by the international mediator Carlos Westendorp, rejected almost unanimously by the members of Parliament of the RS. Because of the NATO offensive on Serbia, these threats have been largely forgotten by media and donor governments. For now.

Peace cannot be kept until a peace seed has been sown among the warring factions, with a genuine desire to achieve peace. Extremist elements still hold power, immune and unchallenged in their strongholds, and long for greater territorial or political gains. The world's richest governments are not willing to bring the guilty to trial, knowing full well that those accused of war crimes are heroes for their own people, and that any such attempt could well spark another series of hostilities. Peace keeping becomes an uneasy *status quo*, where the richest governments most of which are the major international powers will not at best risk taking a step forward for fear of slipping back into an uncontrollable situation, when motives of immobility are not to be found in other far less noble reasons. Six years after the assassination

[24] Sbrebrenica was one of the United Nations "protected enclaves" defended by Dutch troops. When Serb forces closed in on the city in July 1995, 5,000 to 10,000 men fled the city, most of whom were unarmed and slaughtered by Serb forces almost under the eyes of Dutch peace makers, more worried about their own safety than that of the town population.

of the first democratically elected president in Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye, the same impunity among his assassins becomes a characteristic in those countries which strive to achieve a peace that a minority of extremists are able to jeopardize at will, right under the passive look not to say the complacency of the world's richest governments.

There is evident hypocrisy between speech and actions of the world's richest governments, which only shows that peace making and peace keeping have been integrated in and form a part of geopolitics. A problem then arises : should humanitarian aid become a part of geopolitics, each country then possessing its own hidden humanitarian agenda as additional instrument of foreign policy? Certainly some arguments could be found in favor of such a solution : no more funding problems, money would be given from the government according to the degree of political priority given (much as had been done with development assistance during the cold war. Instead of needs-based development assistance, funding was received for strategic purposes under development assistance label).
If all humanitarian aid within each country came under a state central humanitarian aid agency, there could be improved coordination, more efficient funding allocation among the different agencies and this would avoid duplication of resources. So many arguments could be found in favor of such an option. However, a single issue is enough to separate forever humanitarian aid from politics : the objective sought. **The main objective of humanitarian aid is to save and preserve lives, and this is never an overriding political objective**. At best, life-saving can be a good electoral campaign argument. *If life-saving and life-preserving were in truth constant political objectives, the number of starving, malnourished, ill, deprived and destitute people would be much lower, as would the world's mortality rate. The planet's population would be considerably larger, having avoided numerous deaths.*

Means, resources and technical knowledge and capacity currently exist to totally wipe out hunger and other ills, which yearly are responsible for millions of deaths worldwide. But not the political will. So while humanitarian aid is unable to avoid external influences in any conflict, yet it should not be the one to have to bear the consequences of those political decisions. Humanitarian aid must therefore mark clearly its distances with peace making, peace keeping and any other instrument of foreign policy unless it too becomes a part of the political process. The day humanitarian aid becomes another tool of government, its dwindling credibility will be extinguished and the term of humanitarian aid will lose its substance. On the contrary, it must now regain its credentials lost in "humanitarian interventions" alongside armed forces.

For the lucky dweller of the western world, after the fall of the Berlin wall and that of the former Soviet empire, it was thought that highly trained and equipped troops were going to intervene in remote conflictive spots of the world would be enough to guarantee the success of any operation. Wasn't that part of the New World Order, promised by the President of the United States, supported by the United Nations and numerous leaders of the western world? After all, the 1991 Gulf war was proof enough of the might of the allied forces and its capacity to intervene anywhere in the world. Alas, this figure of *deus ex machina* only worked in Greek tragedies over two millennia old. In recent human tragedies, not exceeding the past ten years, the limitations and failures of peace making and peace keeping have appeared with their blatant contradictions. Somalia, Rwanda and the ex-Yugoslavia are three examples where those soldiers who were present at the peak of the crisis, participating in peace making operations, have little, if anything, to be proud of. And our rich and powerful western governments, even less.

2.3 The limits of protection

A series of reasons might be found to explain the failures of peace making and peace keeping, starting for some with the inadequacy of UN Chapter VII terms. "Sending troops without precise mission instructions and without previous risk evaluation is simply inadmissible" stated a high ranking UN diplomat.[25]
It is to be hoped that the adequate lessons will be learnt from previous experiences. A number of issues should however now be clear :

a) *imposing peace is impossible when warring parties don't want peace.* In traditional warfare, peace is achieved only after there is a clear victor (and therefore losers), or when several factions come to an agreement because none is strong enough to reach its objectives at that time. In the first case, peace is more durable, because the vanquished are deemed weak enough not to present any threat in the short term. In the second case, peace is much more unstable, and may last only until one of the faction might be able to reach its objective -by force-. In Bosnia, the peace imposed by the Dayton agreement is all the more fragile that none of the three parties are content with the division of the country, thus obliging international forces to stay on. The alternative today is simply the return to war. *So peace making is a long term and costly process, doomed from the onset if the root causes of the conflict are not adequately addressed with a clear commitment towards a negotiated solution*. Peace making and peace keeping alone are useless unless they are not matched by the political will of the parties in conflict to find a negotiated settlement.
b) *Imposing peace can be most effective when **all** warring parties request an international intervention.* If this is not the case, the international forces run the risk of becoming part of the conflict. If however the use of force has been deemed necessary, then there must be a will to use this force in case the authority of the international forces is baffled or the forces are prevented from achieving their objectives. The Serbs quickly learned that the international forces were not going to use their firepower, and were able to verify that threats and menace of retaliation from the UNPROFOR and IFOR were empty. Only when air strikes against the Serbs started was some credibility temporarily given to the presence of international forces, which only lasted temporarily until Srebrenica fell into Serb hands. This deeply hurt the credibility of the U.N and the world's donor governments as a whole.
c) Perhaps the most evident element that armed interventions are not suitable in humanitarian aid operations may have to do with *the mentality of the military. Military personnel are trained with one essential objective : to win a war, through appropriate defense and offense. To kill or to be killed. Protecting the population has never been a military objective. Protection is only of concern to the military as long as it fits into the overall strategy leading to victory*. *Soldiers do not normally receive any specific training in providing protection civilian population (who are expandable), much less when said population does not even speak or understand the language used by international forces (Somalia, Ex-Yugoslavia)*[26]*. Consequently it makes as much sense to use the military in humanitarian aid as it does to place NGOs personnel as offensive front line in case of conflict. "A soldier*

[25] A. O. Abdallah, "La diplomatie pyromane", op. cit. p. 79
[26] An interesting comparison between military and humanitarian aid criteria is land-mine clearance. In the first case, the military are able to considered "cleared" a field where there are still a number of mines, so long as they are not numerous enough to impede passage of troops. For humanitarian aid, a field has been cleared when the last land-mine has been removed or detonated. Building a school or any other building on the site as long as a single mine remains is simply unacceptable.

by his training is not made to bring people together. He is trained to attack or defend".[27]

It can be argued that personal conflicts among some soldiers between the offensive military training received and the pseudo-humanitarian work expected of them in some countries could well be one of the factors explaining psychological imbalances leading to abuses and atrocities committed by peace keepers on the local population, especially in the case of Mozambique. As special UN investigator Graça Machel reported "In Mozambique, after the signing of the peace treaty in 1992, soldiers of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) recruited girls aged 12 to 18 years into prostitution. After a commission of inquiry confirmed the allegations, the soldiers implicated were sent home. In 6 out of 12 country studies on sexual exploitation of children in situations of armed conflict prepared for the present report, the arrival of peacekeeping troops has been associated with a rapid rise in child prostitution".[28]

Unfortunately, the list of abuses extends far beyond Mozambique, and includes Angola, Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda to name only a few. These kinds of actions by the military only show their lack of sensitivity and their incapacity to evolve in harmony with the human environment. But again, it is not a military objective to blend in harmoniously with the local population. The objective is to win a war. But at what cost?.

2.4 The cost of protection

No matter how costly, humanitarian aid interventions involving the traditional key players -NGOs, UN agencies and other specialized organizations (ICRC, IFRC)-, have always been transparent for the public. Not only because each organization must account to its respective donors as to the use of the funds made, but also for credibility's sake. Logically, it is of interest to the public to know how taxpayers' money has been spent by organizations working in humanitarian aid which have received funding from different governments or state cooperation agencies, as is regularly the case.

The U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, (DHA), now renamed OCHA (Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs), holds an updated list of contributions against the different consolidated appeals which are made as a result of the numerous crises which have required a humanitarian aid intervention (FTS or Financial Tracking System, which can be consulted through the Internet and includes all UN organizations participating in the appeals). **No matter how costly, no matter how effective, the costs of non-military humanitarian aid operations have always been available to the public.**

Not so with the costs of military interventions. Repeated attempts to evaluate their costs have met with, at best, passive resistance, when reactions were not outright hostility. Despite serious attempts, such as the Study III Team "Humanitarian Aid and Effects", part of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda[29],

[27] A. O. Abdallah, "La diplomatie pyromane", op. cit. p. 186

[28] Ms. Graça Machel, expert of the Secretary-General " Impact of armed conflict on children", 1996, point 98, p. 25. Document posted on-line Internet by courtesy of UNDPCSD.

[29] Collaborative study funded by 20 donor organizations and UN agencies, supervised by a Steering Committee comprising 37 agencies and organizations including OECD countries, UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, the European Union.

obtaining adequate cost information on the military proved impossible.[30] The little evidence available tends to show that military costs are very high, not to say prohibitive. In the case of Somalia, it would seem that an extraordinary amount of 1,5 **billion** US dollars were spent on the military, compared to 160 million US dollars spent on relief and rehabilitation[31]. Another source mentions twice as much money allocated to relief : "The U.S. government spent $1.5 billion on its military response to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. During that same period, it spent only $ 311 million on humanitarian assistance".[32] In any case, the amount spent for on military operations was five to ten times the amount spent on humanitarian aid. The United Nations have also stated that peace keeping operations are becoming increasingly expensive. "During its first 48 years, the United Nations have allocated some 4 billion US$ on such operations. The same amount that was spent only for 1993"[33].

The traditional players of humanitarian aid are unable to guarantee an effective protection to the population, little more than the dissuasive factor of their presence on the ground. This limitation of humanitarian aid must be recognized and accepted. Humanitarian aid is not all powerful. No matter how just and sensible human rights or international humanitarian law, their respect cannot be guaranteed universally as long as no international enforcement agency exists.

But the use of armed forces, either to impose peace or to keep peace, has not only created unfulfilled expectations but has proved so ineffective that it is difficult to understand why anyone would want to continue advocating the need for military interventions as a means to conflict resolution. In addition, the costs of these operations are kept hidden from the public, understandably so when said operations are an economic aberration without even reaching an acceptable level of effectiveness. The latest conflict, the March 1999 NATO offensive against Yugoslavia, is reportedly costing some US$ 100 million a day[34]. Considering the length of the NATO offensive of 77 days (24 March to 10 June 1999), the total costs stands currently at the meager sum of US$ 7.7 billion. And without counting the cost of peace keeping troops since.

An abundant economic literature exists on the subject and a majority of economists "have analyzed military expenditure as unproductive, as a burden to be minimized to the greatest extent commensurate with security constraints".[35] Faced with shrinking overall worldwide military expenditures and the move towards smaller but professional armies in several European countries, the arms industry has had to fight back through lobbying and political pressures. As a result, conflicts become testing grounds for new weapons which boosts arms trade. An example of this has been the Patriot missile anti-missile during the Gulf War in 1991. After demonstrating its (alleged) initial efficiency in countering Iraqi missiles aimed at Israel, orders for

[30] See the recommendation for a specific study on the involvement of the military in "Cost-effectiveness Analysis : a useful tool for the assessment and evaluation of relief operation", Alistair Hallam, April 1996, RRN Network Paper 15, ODI , London 1996.
[31] I. Afwerki, "Somalia : Outlines of a Successful Mission", *International Herald Tribune,* October 12, 1993, p.6.
[32] DAC, Report No. 1., op. cit., p. 16
[33] UNDP "Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1994", op. cit., p.84.
[34] EL PAÍS, 8 June 1999, p. 6.
[35] Jacques Fontanel, in a conference organised in The Hague in May 1992 by the Tinbergen Institute and Dutch/Flemish Association of Economists for Peace, published in "Les Cahiers de l'Espace Europe", No 2, December 1992, Université Pierre Mendès France, Grenoble, France, p. 19.

Patriots immediately shot up[36]. But the arms industry is not the only party interested in maintaining high military expenditures. A number of armies, among which those of economic transition countries, would much prefer larger budgetary allocations. The troops become ill-equipped, ill-fed, ill-tempered and may even become a potential threat to stability if military restructuring and staff reinsertion is not adequate. But because the needs for large armies have shrunk as a result of the end of the cold war, conflicts offer a new opportunity to dwindling armies to attempt justifying their existence. As such, they end up becoming competitors of NGOS in humanitarian aid operations, changing their banner from war making to peace making. What will change tomorrow to make us believe that armies are instruments of peace?

While military interventions will hopefully fade out of view, a new trend to create an international police force seems to gather momentum. The idea seduces : police forces are trained to work among civilian communities and know best how to deal in situations which require restraint and a certain level of understanding. The problem is that police are effective in their own country, because they know the history, habits, language, religion, lifestyle and social structure of their people. They have been trained to perform among their own people. But an international police force composed of foreigners may have to deal with most likely insurmountable limitations that the lack of knowledge of the country of operations under all its forms will entail (and not least language skills). Still, the concept is an improvement over direct military intervention.

For military involvement, in all honesty, the single most valid contribution might be limited to one area : cases of nuclear, biological or chemical warfare. "Recent humanitarian emergencies in conflict environments have been characterized by low-level conventional warfare. This will likely not always remain the case. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction means that future humanitarian emergencies might involve responding to the contamination that these weapons can spread. In this area, the military (and national civil defense mechanisms) have a unique ability to respond".[37]

Conclusions from the same report, comparing the advantages and costs of civilian and military means of providing humanitarian assistance during conflict are, *inter alia,* the following :

"3. The military's involvement in recent humanitarian operations has been the result of three factors : the magnitude of certain recent crises and the inability of civilian capacities to meet all the needs created by them, the need for security in many of these crises, and *the desire of governments to appear active in the face of humanitarian need.* …
5. The political realities that surround the involvement of the military make it an unpredictable asset for humanitarian assistance operations in several ways. First, political constraints often mean that military assets cannot be deployed until after the peak of a crisis has been reached. Second, recent experience indicates that when militaries are deployed for humanitarian purposes their involvement in security matters will be restricted. Finally, the use of the military can at times politicize the delivery of humanitarian aid and threaten the neutrality, impartiality and independence of that aid.
6. *Civilian assets are, in general, more cost-effective.* Military means, which are

[36] Based on Army reports, efficiency of the Patriots was reviewed from an initial 100% to less than 50% after all data was analysed.
[37] DAC, Report No. 1., op. cit., p. 15.

designed to be fail-safe rather than efficient, will cost more task-by-task than civilian means. Moreover, the cost of the military providing security for large humanitarian assistance operations will be significantly greater than the cost of providing assistance itself."[38]

The military's involvement in humanitarian aid is not designed to save and preserve lives, but obeys a specific political agenda of its government or military command structure in case of defense organizations. "The need to appear active in the face of humanitarian crises is a foreign policy concern that can, at times, operate independently of objective assessments of what is needed to support a humanitarian assistance operation. Providing humanitarian assistance and military support to it is, in many cases, an admission that governments are either unwilling or unable to provide real political solutions. Humanitarian assistance can become a facade behind which lies a political vacuum. In other cases, by contrast, a state's decision to involve its military in humanitarian assistance can mask a particular political agenda as regards the recipient state. *Unlike some civilian actors, national militaries are not independent agents but instruments subservient to political authorities, priorities and timetables.*"[39] Is there anything more to say?

If one looks at the costs of the military/defense sector outside of humanitarian aid considerations, the amounts are simply exorbitant. Already the amounts of simply global military reduction are impressive : according to UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report[40], the global reduction in military spending between 1987 and 1994 has yielded 935 billion us dollars in "peace dividends", and a further decrease of 3% yearly would yield a further 460 billion us dollars between 1995 and the year 2000. These amounts could decisively contribute to a restructuring of the arms sector and foment development in the medium-term, once structural adjustments in countries holding a large military industrial complex such as the United States, Russia, Britain and France have been made, and the short-term negative effects on employment absorbed. However despite reduction efforts "military spending worldwide is still equal to the cumulated yearly income of half of humanity".[41]

An additional difficulty in accounting for the costs of military expenditures is that international peace keeping/peace making operations also receives money under the humanitarian aid label, so that the channels used for funding peace making and/or peace keeping operations remain opaque. "The cost of military deployments for humanitarian assistance operations are generally borne by defense ministries or, in case of peacekeeping, by the United Nations. Each government has its own means of budgeting, but it appears that only in selected cases are costs charges to foreign affairs or development ministries. National militaries will, however, often seek additional resources for its efforts in humanitarian assistance"[42].

In the case of peace keeping Spanish forces in Bosnia, the costs for the entire operation from November 1992 to June 1998 is approximately 105 billion pesetas, or 700 million US dollars (at 150 pesetas to 1 US$), for contingents averaging 1,300 soldiers (ranging from an initial 753 men to the largest contingent of 1 624).[43] Yearly costs therefore average 140 million US$ (700 divided by five) or **around 108,000 US$ annually per capita**. As compared to the cost of an expatriate from a Spanish

[38] Ibid., p. 32
[39] Ibid., p. 7
[40] UNDP, "Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1994", op. cit., p. 62.
[41] Ibid., p. 2.
[42] DAC, Report No 1., op. cit., p. 17.
[43] EL PAÍS, article "Cinco años en Bosnia", 10 November 1997, p. 25.

NGO such as MSF Spain, amounting to some 20,000 US$ annually (excluding equipment and supplies), military presence is more than five times as costly! If these costs were commensurate with the military's effectiveness, there would be little objection. But looking at results in Mostar in April 1997 hardly showed high effectiveness. The city remained divided between Croats and Bosniac Moslems, although the two are theoretically on the same side (The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). The hundreds of millions ECUs (European Currency Unit) spent in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in addition to peacekeeping efforts had little, if any, impact on reconciliation. As Compared to national accounts, if the whole of the 1998 SFOR in Bosnia (some 34,000 troops) was made up of Spanish military, and keeping a *per capita* annual cost of 108,000 US dollars, military intervention would amount to **3.672 billion** US dollars a year, or 0.66% of Spain's 1995 GDP[44] (and three times the percentage of ODA disbursed in 1996)[45].

While humanitarian aid possesses clear objectives which are essentially to save and preserve lives, effectiveness of the military is also impossible to assess globally, since the real objective is only known by the national government which deployed the military in the first phase. As a result assessing the effectiveness of the military is just as impossible as obtaining clear cost information on military operations. Governments are not willing to grant access to these information, which are considered "strategic". As a result evaluating the overall impact of military interventions becomes impossible.

Clearly, solutions must rest much earlier before a conflict begins. The United Nations recall that "crises seem to appear suddenly, but they are the fruit of failed development policies over years….Emergency aid cannot expect to solve alone these deeply rooted problems. …Military force can do little without a long-term development perspective"[46]. As such, only a clear political will to tackle the *key issues of vulnerability and poverty*[47] might bring a *starting point to conflict resolution*, in addition to proving much more cost-effective. That is also in essence the message of UNDP's 1997 Human Development Report, advocating pro-poor growth policies. Money should be best spent before a disaster, in prevention and preparedness measures, rather than afterwards on doubtfully effective and expensive mitigation measures, such as military interventions.

2.5 Protection in non-conflict disasters

Luckily in case of other disasters the use of armed protection is irrelevant. But protection is necessary because the environment is threatening, and many risks exist for the population -both man-made (such as environmental degradation, chemical leaks, explosions, lack of or insufficient sanitation, potable water and health facilities, absence of adequate waste disposal) as well as natural perils (risks of flooding, fire, landslide, hurricane, etc.). Protection can in this case be studied under the concept of risk management. Risk is an intrinsic part of our lives and can be found in almost any sector of activity. Risks can be related to natural hazards, risk of an earthquake, of a hurricane, of water contamination, of epidemics, risks of war, of illness, of dying, risk of loosing a job, risk of being unhappy, etc.. The "risk" is the

[44] Spain's 1995 GDP amounted to US$ 559 billion, according to UNDP, "Rapport Mondial …1998", op. cit. p. 225.
[45] Ibid., p. 217
[46] UNDP, "Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1994, op. cit., p. 84.
[47] Poverty is here taken as multidimensional human poverty, not only income poverty. UNDP identifies three perspectives on poverty : income perspective, basic needs perspective and capability perspective. Cf "1997 Human Development Report ", box 1.1. p. 16.

degree of probability of occurrence of an event. Accordingly the degree of exposure to risks varies according to the human environment and socio-economic status. Most often the poorest will be more exposed to certain types of risks (although not *all* types of risks result from inadequate socio-economic conditions), both in urban and rural areas.

In urban centers, the slums (or the sadly famous *favelas* in Brazil) around or near large cities are made up of informal settlements, not included in any municipal urban development plan. As a result the geographical location and conditions may be unfit for any permanent human dwelling (absence of infrastructures, water, sewer and waste disposal systems, soil erosion, lack of building codes, low quality of the materials used are only a few of the perils threatening local population). However, most vulnerable housing is cheapest, which the poorest may see as the only available housing option, despite the intrinsic high level of insecurity of informal settlements. A vicious circle thus starts, the poorest being most exposed and least prepared to prevent or mitigate the effects of a natural disaster (landslide, flooding, fire, earthquake, etc.). When their barracks are in shambles or have been destroyed, the poor must again find accommodation, until a subsequent disaster again brings their house to ruin. It becomes therefore extremely difficult for the poor to escape this vicious circle, their meager earnings not allowing them to fruitfully complete their quest for a safe house.

In rural areas, poverty acts as similarly on land distribution. The best lands being costliest, only those with a high socio-economic position are able to afford them. As a result, rural poor live in areas of higher risk (more remote lands of difficult access, topographically elevated, climatically exposed, poorer soil, lack of communication, etc.). Or it may also be that temporary dwellings are installed in high risk but fertile areas (such as flood plains or on volcanoes' slopes). In this last case the risk of loosing their livelihood appears more pressing than the need for safety. This shows that exposure to risks is the result of a complex process of priorities which does not always follow a linear or logical pattern.

Any urban or rural development plan should include a preliminary study of risks assessment and mapping, and policy decisions should be taken to minimize vulnerability levels. After all, "disaster research has demonstrated that increasing hazard and vulnerability patterns **are clearly related to flawed non-sustainable forms of development**"[48]. Failed development policies are increasingly being recognized as a main cause of conflicts and disasters alike.

Protection in this case must then take the form of adequate measures and policies which will protect the most vulnerable in two ways : one, by discouraging the creation of informal settlements. Two, simultaneously, there must be a policy to construct and supply social housing to the most vulnerable so that decent and affordable accommodation can be theirs. A fraction of UNDP's proposed "peace dividends" could be used to that effect. Housing standards will of course vary from one place to another, being highly context specific. But the objective is that risk exposure be reduced to an acceptable level, comparable with that of the rest of local population.

[48] Miami Declaration on Disaster Reduction and Sustainable Development, Florida Int. University, Florida, 2 October 1996, second paragraph.

CHAPTER TWO : SCOPE AND CRITERIA OF HUMANITARIAN AID

1. The extent of humanitarian aid : how far to intervene?

1.1 In conflicts

While humanitarian aid staff has been the target of threats, attacks and even unfortunately killings, these has very rarely occurred right at the beginning of a humanitarian aid operation. Rather, animosity and resentment towards humanitarian aid builds up as time passes, as humanitarian aid appears to become a new form of social charity, apparently ready to install itself in a lasting situation. Humanitarian aid may at times spark resentment among the local population, when better conditions are created in refugee or displaced camps than those available to the local population. In these cases, it is easy to see growing lists for the distribution of food and relief items, as local resident families try to be included in the lists, while the number of consultations in health posts within the camp exceed by far the number of consultations expected for the registered population figure. A serious imbalance is being created as a result of humanitarian aid intervention, among which a possible shift of socio-economic power in the region, eventually leading to longer-lasting consequences.

This could be caused by the undue permanence of humanitarian aid. To be credible and respected, humanitarian aid must be maintained as a short term solution. In fact, if survival is the main objective of humanitarian aid, the basic assistance can well be delivered within three months at the most, no matter how large the crisis. This indeed has been the time-frame required to bring under control the Rwandan refugee operations in Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania. It is one thing to provide life-saving and life-preserving services, but another to maintain an undesired structure which may end up threatening the local environment. Refugee and displaced persons camps have never been anything other than a temporary solution. During the cold war, because of the East/West dichotomy and the geopolitics of the time, a solution to the refugee problems was more difficult. The entire globe reflected the confrontation between the two so-called “super powers”, and refugee camps were established and managed for years (such as Salvadoran refugee camps in Honduras, or Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand).

From the nineties onward, the need for camps to exist more than a year can legitimately be questioned. To maintain a camp structure gives the authorities (those of the host country in case of displaced persons camp, those of the host country and the country of origin in case of refugee camp, and the world’s richest governments) an alibi not to address root causes of the problem. The persistence of humanitarian aid may become essentially an issue of protection. But we have equally seen the limits of protection that humanitarian aid can provide in the new deal of world geopolitics. In the last three large-scale conflicts (Somalia, Rwanda/Great Lakes and ex-Yugoslavia), only in the case of the Rwandese tragedy were long lasting refugee camps set up in Zaire (as well as in Burundi and Tanzania) in July/August 1994. By early 1997, the presence of the large number of former FAR soldiers and *Interhamwe* militia among the two million refugees proved instrumental in the revolt of the ADFL, which ultimately led to the overthrow of the Mobutu dictatorship. The threat of tens of thousands of soldiers and militia re-arming and training for more than two years, most of them within a day’s walk to the Rwandese border, was too much to be ignored by the new Rwandese government. In this case, the persistence of inadequately set up camps was an additional factor which led to a military solution and a new humanitarian crisis. It is estimated that tens of thousand of those

refugees previously assisted by humanitarian aid disappeared or were eliminated during the March/April 1997 offensive of the ADFL (HCR estimations are up to 200,000). Although the figure is enormous, it must be added to the by far larger number of genocide victims of April 1994 in Rwanda.

1.2. In non-conflict disasters[49]

In natural disasters the credibility and legitimacy of humanitarian aid has rarely been questioned. After an earthquake, for example, specialized personnel is sent to the region (search and rescue teams, medical staff, civil engineers, etc.) for a limited time period. The magnitude of these disasters is most often not comparable to that of large conflicts in terms of external support requested[50]. Even when large international support is requested, donors rarely respond very generously unless the disasters have received intensive international media exposure. Consequently the resources sent for natural disaster response tend to be inferior to those of conflict situations, both in human and material terms as well as in terms of funding allocations. Traditionally in these cases the main objective of a humanitarian aid intervention is saving lives. Searching for survivors, rescuing them, providing the adequate medical intervention are the main activities. Protection here is no longer useful. There can only be reduction of the effects caused by the disaster in an attempt to save and preserve as many lives as possible. And, as such, humanitarian aid activities can well be completed within a short time-frame, well under the three months required by humanitarian aid in some conflict situations.

It should become obvious then that only a well targeted humanitarian aid intervention, limited in time, is able to provide the most non-conflictive form of aid and generate the least negative effects. To maintain humanitarian aid with the sole objective of providing protection might prove counter-productive for various reasons:

a) because the protection provided by humanitarian aid is only relative, not absolute, and mainly depends on the goodwill of those who threaten the population at risk (protection by dissuasion)
b) because to enforce protection through the use of armed forces has proved not to be the solution, being at times totally ineffective
c) because humanitarian aid might generate disruption in the power balance of the region and might have long term effects on the environment
d) because humanitarian aid can be perceived as biased and "politicized"
e) because of the absence of criteria and agreement on how to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid
f) because local copying mechanism may at times be more effective (i.e. cases where refugees are hidden -a seemingly much more effective form of protection- by the local population)

2. Criteria for humanitarian aid operations

[49] The devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America at the end of 1998 constitutes an exception given the immediate mobilisation of external assistance and shows new tendencies in humanitarian aid involvement in large-scale disasters. The example is presented in chapter five.
[50] There are of course cases of large-scale destruction, such a recurrent massive flooding in Bangladesh, or the torrential rains and flooding in China in 1998 which have affected 180 million people but which the government has faced with limited external support. In this case disasters affect a single country. This is quite different from the situation in the Ex-Yugoslavia or in the Great Lakes crisis in which the situation of one country (Rwanda) is linked to the level of implication of the governments of neighbouring countries (Burundi, Uganda, Zaire, etc.)

Humanitarian aid has heretofore been seen by occidental eyes as something intrinsically good and well meaning, noble and useful. Something to be proud of, looking forward to saving lives and alleviating human suffering. Humanitarian aid has become quite fashionable during the nineties, as the sharp increase in the numbers of NGO's in every donor country demonstrates. However what one does not look at very often are the criteria *in* a humanitarian aid operation.

Criteria for humanitarian aid operations are simple. To summarize, it could be said that humanitarian aid generally takes place when :

a) a disaster has struck causing a number of victims, and
b) local copying mechanisms are unable to control the incident, requiring external assistance, and
c) disaster strikes in a developing or under-developed country, and
d) disaster is spectacular enough to gain international media coverage.

However the "minimum size" for a disaster which will request a humanitarian aid intervention varies according to context. In some small island-states of the Caribbean, for example, the crash of a small airplane can be enough to trigger an emergency (critical mass) requiring external (but regional) humanitarian aid. So the concept of crisis or emergency is country, even region specific.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is a key concept behind humanitarian assistance. According to the Webster Dictionary, vulnerable means "capable of or susceptible to being wounded or hurt; open to attack or assault; difficult to defend"[51]. Yet there are many definitions. One of them defines vulnerability as "the incapacity of a community to absorb, through self-adjustment, the effects of a specific change in its environment, therefore its inflexibility or incapacity to adapt to such a change".[52] Although vulnerability can be divided in different sub-categories (up to ten according to some experts)[53], human *poverty* is clearly one of the main causes of vulnerability, even if it is not the only one. Global vulnerability, which includes all its possible expressions, is something people must live with. All human beings are, to some extent or another, vulnerable. But we are not all vulnerable to the same things, as vulnerability goes well beyond the mere threat of physical damage and death, and can extend to all aspects of human life.

As far as humanitarian aid is concerned, it is vulnerability to death and physical and psychological injury, in addition to vulnerability to insufficient material conditions, which tend to dictate the selection of beneficiaries. But in practice the identification of vulnerability criteria have always been difficult.

2.1 Vulnerability criteria

Once humanitarian aid has begun its activities, it must also look at the criteria *within* its operation. One of the difficulties may lie at times in the selection criteria for beneficiaries. Because resources are limited, humanitarian aid will target essentially the most vulnerable. But criteria are subject to discussion and disagreement. The donor community has intended to identify single criteria to allow for easier

[51] Webster Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 1994 edition.
[52] A. Maskrey, "Los desastres no son naturales", LA RED, 1993, p. 23. Please refer to pages 47 to 50 for seven different definitions of "vulnerability".
[53] Ibid., chapter II presents the different sub-categories e.g. social, economic, cultural, physical, technical, ideological, educational, ecological and institutional.

operational capacities, but the results remain questionable. The use of single criteria to determine vulnerability is a widely used error which continues to be applied because of the difficulty in identifying practical multi-dimensional criteria which would allow for a rapid selection of beneficiaries.

It is commonly admitted and case studies have demonstrated that women and children, the elderly, single woman-headed households (and at times demobilized soldiers in conflicts) constitute a prime target group. However, should their vulnerability be given for certain only because of their categorization within a given group? In other words, should every single woman, every single child, every single elderly, every single woman-headed household be recipient of humanitarian aid just because of their sex, age or marital status? As an example, a food aid program in Bosnia in 1997 run by the American Red Cross and implemented through the local Red Cross had used only one criterion : to be over 65 years of age, regardless of socio-economic or income status. While fairly wealthy older people may not represent a significant proportion of beneficiaries, age is not quite a sufficiently valid vulnerability indicator by itself to qualify as aid beneficiary.

Another difficulty in the choice of criteria is to reach a “cut off” point, which fixes a clear limit (age or otherwise) as to who will be eligible. Again in Bosnia technical discussions between UN agencies and NGOs by early May 1997 had not been able yield an agreement on cut-off points for the elderly (60, 62, or 65 years of age, if not more), much less so for children (12, 14, 16 or 18 years of age, if not 21, 23, etc.).

Difficulty in targeting vulnerability is further compounded by the general lack of interest of governments in attempting to define vulnerability criteria. Many terms exist to designate beneficiaries of humanitarian aid : at times labeled “victims”, at times “displaced”, “refugees”, in conflict situations. In disasters, the labels used are traditionally that of “affected” and “damaged”. But these terms are essentially a qualification, not giving any indication whatsoever as to the level of vulnerability of the people. Any analysis that looks at the selection criteria of beneficiaries in humanitarian aid will have to address the difficult issue of defining vulnerability adequately. And that is rarely done. As if what humanitarian aid provides is more important than to whom and why. In the case of Hurricane Mitch, a number of NGOs are reconstructing houses for the people who have lost their homes, sometimes reportedly investing in this process up to twice the per capita GDP (that is, up to US$ 5,000) of the country where they are operating. But for one family receiving a newly reconstructed house, how many others have lost their shacks? The informal buildings and settlements are obviously not going to be reconstructed. But comparatively, it may be that the loss of the wooden shack affects much more the poor person than the person whose cement and tile roof house has been destroyed. In other words, the expression of vulnerability in economic terms is far from sufficient to define the most vulnerable. In the previous example, the cost of reconstructing the wooden shack is practically next to nothing in informal settlements as compared to the cost of rebuilding a house in concrete. Yet the reconstruction of houses has been identified as a priority for many NGOs, because of the high visibility and media exposure that these activities receive.

In this case the criteria is “most vulnerable to damaged/destroyed housing”, but certainly not the most vulnerable in global terms. Unfortunately this ethic problem does not seem to be worth the trouble, since no criticism to NGOs neither from the governments nor civil society have been expressed in this respect.

the cultural dimension

Traditionally vulnerability criteria (normally a single indicator) have been designed by donors and implementing NGOs, in order to justify the beneficiary groups targeted. As such, criteria have been defined and used in a typically Western frame, placing the individual as the center of society. In order to verify that *the most vulnerable* (individuals), belonging to the right category, have received the adequate assistance, many NGOs tend to carry out random household checks. While this appears to add credibility and enhance accountability in distributions, this process negates any approach based on a different social structure, where the community and not the individual is the basic social structure. In some African tribes the concept of community may extend to a whole clan, not only to relatives, while in other cultures the community may be reduced to the most immediate family (mother, father and children). Any approach that plans to target only the most vulnerable, without taking into consideration the prevailing cultural and social structure, may well quickly encounter some degree of failure. As an example, MSF France has had to re-admit malnourished children in their feeding center in Mozambique (Zambezia province, 1989-1991) although they were discharged healthy. Only when sufficient food rations were given to the entire household did the child receive his share and did not need re-admittance (the youngest being fed last).

To target the individual is a mistake induced by our cultural background. *Any vulnerability assessment must be community based, while the concept of community must be adequately addressed in social and cultural (and therefore as well as ethnic and religious) terms. It is country, even region specific. Vulnerable individuals will automatically be covered in a community-based vulnerability assessment* ***provided the right methodology is used.***

Vulnerability criteria are less important than the methodology used, for two reasons :

1) because vulnerability is dynamic and fluid, changing in form and patterns over time. Only the community is able to identify, monitor and track vulnerability over a period of time. No one better than its members knows the people most in need in a community;
2) because humanitarian aid is limited in time. If beneficiaries and communities do not understand the criteria used, how can they be expected to cope when humanitarian aid ceases? A proper methodology is needed to allow the community to develop local “copying mechanisms” or to strengthen any such existing mechanism and integrate it in the response given. Humanitarian aid agencies must use a much more participatory approach and work as a team with communities, rather than acting as teachers.

2.2. Accountability

2.2.1. Financial accountability

It is another common procedure of humanitarian aid that implementing agencies and organizations are accountable for the use of the funds received. But what is meant by accountability? This donor standard requires an agency to be able to justify the good use of funds received in accordance with the professed goal. As an example, if NGO XYZ receives US$ 100,000 for the purchase of drugs, they will not be able to use the funds to buy new vehicles or for another purpose. The money is not being diverted to other means, and in this way, an ethical standard is being achieved. This form of accountability could be called financial accountability. It is in general very widely acknowledged and respected by humanitarian aid organizations, since any

breach of ethical accountability might not only entail the end of funding from the donor, but equally a loss of credibility of the NGO among major donors, leading possibly to the end of all institutional funding.
However despite good overall financial accountability, abuses from funds recipients are always possible, especially in complex multisectoral projects which cover both emergency and development activities.

However, while accountability is always foremost in donors' mind, standard methodologies for evaluation of humanitarian aid operations surprisingly do not include any auditing services for fund recipients, thereby showing a certain contradiction. In other words, as an example, when a donor requests an evaluation of a humanitarian aid operation by a consulting firm, the auditing of accounts of NGO XYZ will normally not be part of the terms of reference. While donors have their own auditing firms, which must verify the donors' own accounts, there is no one within the donor's administrative staff systematically auditing accounts of NGOs and other humanitarian organizations funded. One can of course argue that each NGO must have its own accounts approved by its own auditing firm, and that any financial mismanagement might eventually be known. But the way accounts are managed and run by some humanitarian aid organizations are so complex that it would require a bookkeeping expert to detect irregularities. After all, auditing firms certify that accounts are balanced, but do not justify the use of funds made. So while an overwhelming majority of organizations do practice adequate financial accountability, experience in evaluation has shown that some organizations may try to take advantage of a certain funding flexibility, being particularly tempted by a possible duplication of funds for a same project especially when donors are in separate continents and no specific auditing of accounts is requested.

While funding flexibility is compulsory in humanitarian aid, in order to minimize as much as possible bureaucratic procedures (administrative and financial) to facilitate the disbursement of funds in the shortest possible time, donors' financial administrative staff are bent on avoiding the smallest irregularity. Because it is their role to ensure that financial and administrative procedures are respected to the letter, in some donor organizations, a dichotomy might appear between the financial/administrative department and other services in charge of humanitarian aid operations (such as the so-called geographical "desks", people in charge of backstopping a specific operation at donors' headquarters : desk for Bosnia, desk for Somalia, desk for Rwanda, etc.).

When such a dichotomy appears, the financial/administrative staff become totally detached from the donor's aim, and may follow a specific path only valid for their financial/administrative service. In short, donor's financial departments run the risks of alienating themselves with the primary aim of the donor : to fund and support humanitarian aid operations. In humanitarian aid, the risks are that constraints imposed by the financial department on other services might directly affect the efficiency of humanitarian aid operations. The most negative results can be that delays in funding jeopardize an operation, which is unable to continue because finally funds have not yet been transferred, or some signature is missing on some contract, or that approval for disbursement has not been given because the responsible person is not available, etc.. Unfortunately these things happen, although they should not.

In some cases, consequences can be catastrophic and a bureaucratic impediment to transfer funds may, in practice, directly translate into higher human suffering, disruption of normal project activities, suspension of essential services, or at worst

even a higher death toll. It is certainly preferable to have a few thousand of US dollars unjustified but effectively spent than precise accountability but no effectiveness in reducing human suffering. The United Nations CERF account was used to quick start humanitarian aid after the Rwandese tragedy. While sorting out of accounts proved a real nightmare for the administrative staff, yet extremely valuable work was performed thanks to the use of these funds. But staff in donor's financial department are rarely field staff, aware of operational constraints. However they receive a professional treatment, unlike a large number of implementing organizations which use volunteer staff in the field. Donors should spare no effort to ensure that financial departments blend in and support operational services, rather than appearing as an additional constraint. All in the name of accountability. The best accountability is a successful and effective humanitarian aid intervention. What is needed is less focus on financial accountability and higher focus on operational effectiveness.

2.2.2. Operational accountability

Another type of accountability is the delivery of products or services all the way to the end user. This applies directly to operations on the ground, between the implementing organization and the beneficiaries. It can therefore be labeled as "operational" accountability. In this case, accountability has to do with ensuring that products and services efficiently reach aid beneficiaries. A very large part of products (food aid, drugs, blankets, clothing, etc.) and services (medical, nutritional and health services) are channeled through NGOs and other specialized humanitarian organizations, with good overall accountability. This is what external evaluations are able to assess. However humanitarian aid may be at times given to local entities. Donors are in general reticent to such a procedure, partly because past experience has not always been satisfactory, partly because they have taken a habit of resorting to a core group of international NGOs, UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations as their main operational partners. By preferring international foreign organizations over local organizations, donors undermine the strengthening of local capacity building (or in other words construction or support of local response/mitigation mechanisms in crisis or post-crisis situations). Local communities should be empowered. But one argument used by donors against local capacity building is that accountability presumably will sharply drop if assessments and distributions are made through local civil society (local NGO, communities, local government, etc.). While experience has shown this to be true in some specific cases[54], advantages might outweigh disadvantages in the longer term. It may be preferable to guarantee the existence of a local capacity which will, when humanitarian aid ceases, face the challenge of caring for its own people, rather than ensuring a maximal accountability in the short term, only to run the risk of a potential return to emergency assistance shortly after humanitarian aid withdraws - given the existence of a gap no one is able to cover, due to the lack of means and of know-how.

But the recent past shows a new trend towards improved accountability from the local NGOs and civil society : in Honduras for example, the Honduran Red Cross is having all its accounts (and that of sister Red Cross societies operating in Honduras) audited by the government's Court of Auditors (Contraloria del Estado) to ensure transparency in the post hurricane Mitch activities. This is an excellent example of how local NGOs, civil society and governments could easily gain credibility and the

[54] For example in Mozambique, the amount of "losses" through the DPCCN (Departamento de Prevençâo e Combates as Calamidades Naturais - the government body in charge of logistics and food distribution at national level) ran up to peaks of 70% in some months (1990-1991 figures).

trust of donors : by ensuring that external professional audits (in the case of governments, private auditing firms should be contracted) present clear accounts.

One must not be so naïve as to believe that any local organization is preferable to a foreign NGO. There is evidence that in recent conflicts, warlords and other politico-military commanding figures are taking advantage of humanitarian aid either through direct predatory services (ensuring protection of staff and convoys in Somalia, Bosnia, etc. against payment or "levy" on goods), through the commercial sector (housing and warehousing rents for humanitarian aid staff, provision of logistics/transport services, sale of locally produced goods to be used for humanitarian distribution, etc.), or even more subtly through the creation of their own NGOs[55]. So while support to local organizations is essential, funding recipients must be closely scrutinized in situations where there may be a clear economic or political advantage to be gained from humanitarian aid presence.

Operational accountability, the same as funding accountability, operates in a short-term perspective, much as humanitarian aid is concerned about short-term objectives and results. But accountability is relative. It mainly serves as a short-term efficiency indicator, rather than an effectiveness indicator. There are wide differences between the two concepts, which may be illustrated by the following example :

During the March 1997 ADFL offensive in Eastern Zaire, new refugee camps were established further into Zaire to accommodate some of the refugees which had fled from the North Kivu (Goma) and South Kivu (Bukavu and Uvira) region. Logistics constraints made it very difficult for organizations such as HCR to access the refugees and provide them with the basic support. However after having started a new humanitarian aid operation in several newly established camps, agencies were denied access to these new camps. By the time access was again granted, all refugees had left and were nowhere to be found. It is suspected that large numbers were killed.

In this case, the provision of water, food and medical services may have been very well organized and efficiently managed. The operations report from humanitarian organizations may detail how things went in the beginning, despite the difficulties in finding the refugees, and then being able to gain access to them. Maybe the idea was to re-start assisting camps in the same manner as had been done for two years in the older camps along the border, which had emptied because of the fighting? Clearly this was not part of ADFL's strategy. So while **actions** of humanitarian aid organizations were commendable, nonetheless overall results were disappearance of refugees. In other words, assistance provided by humanitarian organizations may have been very efficient, but the outcome of the operation was ineffective. Of course, the fault cannot be placed on humanitarian aid. If it had been allowed to, it would certainly have aided refugees in the same way as in the other camps. However, it may be that humanitarian organizations have been short-sighted or lacked threat indicator monitoring. The refugee problem was brewing since fall 1994 and it was known that Rwanda was not going to sit idle while their former foes (FAR and *Interhamwe* militia) regrouped, rearmed and trained under the cover of HCR managed refugee camps. This threat had to be eliminated, and since voluntary repatriation to Rwanda from Zaire had proved a failure, a much more energetic solution had to be found. In fact, it can even be said that one of the objectives which

[55] In Kurdistan six local NGOs were reportedly created by political parties in order to take advantage of humanitarian aid. cf. "Economie des guerres civiles", sous la direction de François Jean et Jean-Christophe Rufin, Hachette, 1996, p. 122.

gave rise to the ADFL offensive was to defuse the potential threat that refugee camps represented for the new Rwandan regime.

So what does this example indicate? It goes to show that while humanitarian aid had been going on for more than two and a half years in refugee camps, and had been particularly efficient in the early stages of the crisis (particularly the celerity with which the humanitarian community (UN, NGOs, Red Cross, etc.) responded to the huge refugee influx in Goma in 1994, the same as in Benaco, Tanzania), the effectiveness of operations along the Zairian border was reduced to nothing in a few days, as a new crisis caused the abandon of refugee camps and the disappearance of refugees.

An important factor, in this case, is that the humanitarian aid operation in camps had been going on for more than two years, well beyond what can be considered as short-term. It also goes to show that the impact of humanitarian aid can generate negative effects when operations exceed the emergency phase *stricto sensu* (that is, both the primary and secondary emergency phase) and humanitarian aid is maintained because no other solution to the problem has been found. In this case, humanitarian aid is no longer only concerned by the short-term, although operations are still run as if only the short-term should count. In reality, humanitarian aid requires a longer-term perspective, in order to take into account the effects it generates (i.e. enhancing the importance of life-preserving activities). In the prior example, undue persistence of humanitarian aid well over the emergency phase, coupled with the impossibility for humanitarian aid organizations to identify and separate soldiers and militia from civilians inside refugee camps, might well have proved instrumental in the new crisis during which refugees literally disappeared in the bush. Under these circumstances, no matter how efficiently goods and services were channeled, what can be said about overall effectiveness of the operation? Two years of work reduced to nothing in a few days. Hardly a success. Hardly effective.

2.3. Efficiency versus effectiveness - different views of humanitarian aid - a sector approach

While donors seem to be focusing ever more into measurement indicators for humanitarian aid, little thought is given as to overall effectiveness of humanitarian aid operations. It would seem as though measuring the number of liters of drinking water per person, or the exacts weight and nutritional content of food rations, or the number of pieces of clothing distributed, or blankets, or any other material assistance was proof enough of a successful operation. Clearly, it is not. As humanitarian aid becomes more and more complex, some organizations and donors tend to adopt a sectoral approach, in order to tackle humanitarian aid problems on a "sector by sector" basis. This is quite futile and goes against any sensible approach based on targeting vulnerability within an integrated approach. From a beneficiary's point of view, it matters little what label is given to assistance received, as long as humanitarian aid is able to cover needs. So why are artificial separations being made?

For one, because humanitarian aid has gone well beyond the single aspect of human survival in its operations, and has included many components which are not a part of its main objectives. Psycho-social projects, reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, including local capacity building projects are many relatively new activities that humanitarian aid now funds around the globe. So humanitarian aid has spread well beyond emergency even into development activities. It cannot therefore afford to rely on short-term efficiency indicators. Humanitarian aid can no longer think short-

term accountability. It must also think in terms of longer-term responsibility, sustainable life-preserving activities.

Second, because the so-called “sectoral” approach is not based on any technical grounds. For some time it seemed to make sense to distinguish humanitarian aid activities by giving them a different label : food aid, medical, water and sanitation, logistics, nutrition, etc., but only as a means to differentiate activities, or eventually identify the adequate technical skills required for an operation. But even that is relative. Nutrition requires a substantial amount of medical knowledge, and in some organizations (such as the ICRC) nutritional experts and nutritional activities are placed under the supervision of a medical coordinator. The same is valid for water and sanitation. As for logistics, it is a pre-condition to humanitarian aid. If there is no transport to gain access to vulnerable groups and supply them with what is needed, there can be no humanitarian aid. In addition, these categories have not been precisely defined in technical terms, meaning that absence of criteria for labeling sectoral activities may well end up creating some kind of confusion as to usefulness of these labels. (A similar problem to the one on categories of vulnerable people mentioned earlier - i.e. the lack of an agreed cut-off point for children, elderly, etc.)

But there is a risk donor institutions to use these ill-defined “sectors” today with a different view. There is an overriding need to foment and consolidate an integrated multisectoral approach of humanitarian aid, based on field needs assessment and community participation. Comparing graphics on sectoral spending should not be used as a decision making tool, since humanitarian aid is context specific. In extreme cases risks are that certain policy decisions on humanitarian aid operations be taken on the basis of artificial “sectoral” considerations, instead of following a needs-based field-driven approach. The danger is to fall into sectoral accountability, i.e. efficiency indicators, while the overall operation may be ineffective. Aspirin is a very efficient drug, but when used to treat malaria, it is totally ineffective. Efficiency by itself does not guarantee the successful outcome of humanitarian aid operations.
It is clearly fashionable among donors to fund “health” and “education” programs. But what is the use of concentrating efforts in two sectors if other basic necessities are left uncovered? It is just as useful as constructing new schools in places which have been abandoned by people. *It is absolutely necessary to conceive humanitarian assistance from the perspective of the beneficiary rather than from that of a donor. It is the only way to identify comprehensive and integrated programs which cover all needs transversally*.

Humanitarian aid must not only be accountable, it must be sustainable. How can sustainability be ensured and monitored? Through the use of effectiveness analysis.

2.4. Effectiveness as the most appropriate tool for humanitarian aid operations

In a primary emergency efficiency and effectiveness are linked, as efficiency demonstrated by local humanitarian aid (triage, first aid, surgery, etc.) will have a direct impact on human survival. In this context, effectiveness depends on efficiency. Not so in humanitarian aid operations extending well beyond the short-term, where activities are life-preserving rather than life-saving. The previous example of Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire (1994-1997) is evidence that efficiency of the entire NGOs community in said camps for more than two years was useless in ensuring refugee survival when the 1997 spring crisis took place. From the perspective of human survival (i.e. longer term life preservation activities), humanitarian aid proved ineffective.

Humanitarian aid must also be sustainable. It is not enough to ensure survival from one day to the next. Humanitarian aid must evolve from its traditional "day to day survival" perspective and incorporate a longer term perspective. This means that greater emphasis should also be given to life-preserving and vulnerability reducing activities.

In this the use of effectiveness as a indicator of success and/or of failure of humanitarian aid can be of help. Two effectiveness indicators can therefore be developed. One for short-term emergency operations, another for longer lasting humanitarian aid operations (situations such as Somalia, the Great Lakes region or Bosnia). In the short-term humanitarian aid must save lives. To appraise the effectiveness of such an operation, it should be feasible to verify that the number of people attended have really survived and to know the overall death toll. Until now, humanitarian aid normally merely records mortality rates (see the example in Chapter one, case of the measles epidemic) and death toll. What humanitarian aid does not indicate, however, are the effects of its intervention on the death toll and mortality rate. In other words, epidemiologists register careful morbidity and mortality data to present the situation and monitor its evolution. But in no way is there an impact measurement as to the effects of humanitarian aid. Yet one could imagine that the knowledge of the number of "avoided deaths" should be of paramount importance for an activity centered on human survival. Could it not be possible then to imagine an *ex post* death toll effectiveness indicator?

2.4.1 Ex post death toll effectiveness indicator

To obtain such an indicator, one must compare the number of deaths that humanitarian aid has been unable to avoid with that of the total population assisted.

In certain specific situations (small scale natural disasters), it is possible to physically count the dead, but in large scale disasters, a head count is impossible. In addition, refugee and/or displaced population are unstable both in numbers and in geographic location, which makes a precise count often impossible. The first step towards impact assessment of humanitarian aid must therefore be limited to an estimation of the overall beneficiary population in the first phase (*ex ante* estimate). When distribution of relief items starts, population figures estimates are able to become more precise. Food distribution can provide a better estimate, even if still insufficient.[56] The most adequate, although far from perfect, method of counting beneficiaries might be to compare beneficiary population figures for all forms of activities (medical, food aid, relief items, etc.) in order to obtain a cross-sector overall average. This figure would represent the average beneficiary population for all activities of humanitarian aid, and would therefore be the figure used to determine *ex post* effectiveness (e.g. at the end of the operation). Because beneficiary caseloads and conditions change frequently, such a figure should be calculated on monthly basis.

In an ideal situation, three mortality indicators are necessary to assess the impact of humanitarian aid on survival. The first is the traditional mortality rate (i.e. before the disaster or the crisis). This represents the number of deaths in the usual environment before the disaster/crisis and before humanitarian aid. The second is the death toll resulting from the disaster/crisis (direct effects, i.e. number of deaths

[56] Food rations vary according to situations and countries, but the individual food ration is normally equivalent to some 2,000 kilocalories per person per day, although in some cases quantities may drop substantially (down to 300 to 800 kcal/person/day in some Barundi refugee camps in Rwanda and Tanzania, according to MSF "Populations en danger 1995", La Découverte, Paris 1995, p. 115-116.

caused by an earthquake) and the mortality rate resulting from the disaster/crisis (indirect effects, i.e. mortality caused by a cholera epidemic after a natural disaster, or ripple effects of the first crisis). The third is the mortality rate and death toll *ex post*, at the end of the humanitarian aid operation.

The first indicator can easily be obtained. All countries have today statistical information about mortality rates, even if they are not always updated. The third indicator should measure effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

The difficulty lies in the second indicator. Ideally the third indicator (effects of humanitarian aid *ex post*) should be compared to the second indicator (mortality and death rate without humanitarian aid). But because humanitarian aid is there to minimize mortality rate and death toll, these indicators will be lowered. In other words, it will not be possible to know the exact number of deaths or the mortality rate without a humanitarian intervention, unless it has not taken place, in which case no measure of effectiveness is necessary. While we have seen that humanitarian aid is powerless to act on direct effects of disaster (no physical presence in primary emergency phase), its results in a secondary emergency phase have been proven time and again (vaccination, medical, health and nutritional care, etc.). Maybe the best short-term effectiveness indicator would be to compare the third indicator, death toll and mortality *ex post* with the first indicator, the "normal" mortality rate.

A concrete example might be used illustrate the use of indicators. Gross mortality rate for Zaire in 1992 was 15%o[57]. This is equivalent to a "normal" rate, before the crisis of October 1993 in Burundi or the crisis of April 1994 in Rwanda. In other words, this was the rate before a humanitarian aid intervention. In April 94, massive killings started (primary emergency phase) in Rwanda, leading up to 500,000 to 1,000,000 dead. During this phase practically no humanitarian aid agency was present or able to operate in the country[58]. By August 1994 (secondary emergency) numerous refugee camps were established along the Zairian border (as well as in Tanzania and Burundi) with large-scale humanitarian aid.

The **short-term effectiveness indicator** would be then to compare the monthly mortality rate with the "normal" mortality rate. The closer to the normal rate, the more effective. If by the end of August 1994 the overall mortality rate was 2%o[59] in refugee camps, the effectiveness indicator would then be as follows :
I e = ex post mortality/"normal" mortality. For August, the indicator would be 2%o/1.25% (15%o annual mortality), or 1.6. A figure close to 1 indicates that mortality has been kept at a pre-crisis level, a figure under 1 indicates that humanitarian aid has lowered mortality beyond pre-crisis levels. The higher the figure the less effective the intervention.

To obtain the **death toll effectiveness**, one should multiply the effectiveness indicator by the total number of assisted population. In this case, the assisted population in Zaire was estimated at 1,600,000 refugees[60]. Death toll effectiveness would then be : ***DT e*** = (*ex post* mortality minus "normal" mortality), multiplied by the total assisted population, or 0.75%o x 1,600,000 = 1,200 dead. Effectiveness increases as numbers get closer to zero and become negative.

[57] UNDP, "Rapport Mondial sur le développement humain 1994", op. cit., p. 187.
[58] except for ICRC and MSF. Unfortunately, even some local staff were killed in front of expatriates. This greatly diminished the operational capacity of these organizations.
[59] Arbitrary figure only for calculation purposes. This does not represent the actual overall mortality rate.
[60] Op. cit., "March-August 1994 Appeal".

As time passes, effectiveness of humanitarian aid normally increases. For one the weakest will have died, the situation will have acquired some stability (unless a new crisis occurs or an epidemic breaks out) and humanitarian aid will have gained better knowledge and control of the situation. If we imagine that mortality by the end of September 1994 was at 1.5%0, the ***I e*** would be equal to 1.2 and ***DT e*** would be 400 dead. If by December 1996 the *ex post* mortality was 1%o, then ***I e*** would be 0.8 and ***DT e*** would be -400. In other words, mortality would be lower than before humanitarian aid by 400 extra survivors for the month of December 1996. Obviously this is something to be proud of. If the rest of the country maintained a yearly rate of 15%o, this would also mean that humanitarian aid was creating a certain imbalance, lowering mortality only for one specific population group in a selected area. But if humanitarian aid must target the most vulnerable, and that mortality is lower among refugee population than among resident population, is humanitarian aid really still targeting *the most vulnerable* ?

Of course, it may make little sense to continue measuring monthly mortality rates two years after a crisis. In this case a more suitable effectiveness indicator must be found, applicable for longer lasting humanitarian aid operations.

Measuring effectiveness in contained environments may yield the best results. However, when impact measurement needs to be applied in cases of natural disasters (floods or droughts) which affect an extensive geographical area inhabited by scattered population, it may not be so easy to obtain immediately reliable mortality rate or death toll figures. Initially, estimations must be made, explaining the methodology used.

As with any tools and indicators, such a system naturally has inherent limitations. It should be remembered that the use of these tools in no way guarantee the effectiveness of the operation, but it does contribute to giving greater attention to monitoring overall effectiveness and impact of the humanitarian operations. Still, it is not substitute to dedicated and qualified staff which form the core of effective humanitarian aid operations.

2.4.2 HDI and HPI as effectiveness indicators in longer lasting humanitarian aid operations

Although there may be an interest in comparing the evolution of mortality rates over a two-year period in the above example, it is not a sufficient effectiveness indicator. It would have made more sense to keep monitoring mortality data in Bosnia, during all the months that lasted the siege of Sarajevo (long-lasting crisis). In Zaire, there was no real crisis for Rwandan refugees until spring 1997. For two and a half years, humanitarian aid remained to assist refugees. Yet there was no immediate threat to their survival during that period. How then can effectiveness of humanitarian aid be measured?

When humanitarian aid stays even beyond the secondary emergency phase, once that basic life saving services have been installed and provided, it must change its focus from the traditional immediate or quick impact effects of its operations to longer term objectives. In short, it must become sustainable, and attempt to blend in within the environment, minimizing as much as possible the negative effects it can generate. Sustainable humanitarian aid is not only concerned about being effective among its target group, it is also concerned about how it affects the environment

(social, political, ecological, economic, etc.) in which it operates. In this context, humanitarian aid rules must change.

In long lasting operations, human lives are not threatened every day. Day to day survival is replaced by the concern for sustainable life-preserving activities. This implies a review of humanitarian means and methods in light of existing constraints. Even the objectives of humanitarian aid must then be reviewed : what are the reasons for extending humanitarian aid beyond a short term emergency? In this case humanitarian aid must submit itself to an exercise of self-criticism and evaluation.

To assess its effectiveness in longer term operations, humanitarian aid may well use two indicators used in development : HDI and HPI.

The first indicator is the Human Development Index, based on three factors : longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by the life span, knowledge by adult literacy rate (for two thirds) and average years of education (one third), and standard of living through real GNP per capita in purchasing power parity US dollars[61].

A more subtle indicator has been presented in 1997 with the Human Poverty Index[62], focusing on deprivation through the same three essential elements of human life : longevity, knowledge and standard of living. The first element still has to do with survival, and is represented by the percentage of people expected to die before age 40 (as opposed to average life span in HDI). Knowledge here is measured by the percentage of illiterate adults (entirely, as opposed to including the average years of education in HDI). Standard of living has been measured using a composite of three variables : percentage of people with access to health services and to safe water, and percentage of malnourished under five (as opposed to GNP per capita in HDI). The perspective shifts from conglomerative (GNP in HDI) to deprivational (in the HPI). In other words, one indicator values the whole of society (HDI), the other goes to specifics (HPI). HPI may prove a more valuable indicator in countries with crippled economies and large informal sectors than HDI given unreliability and difficulty in obtaining GDP and GNP data.

Humanitarian aid would then monitor the same variables in its catchment area. A yearly comparison between national HPI and those in humanitarian aid areas would then yield humanitarian aid effectiveness. Where HPI values would be equal or superior to national values effectiveness of humanitarian aid be measured. In those areas where HPI values would be inferior to national values, humanitarian aid should then have to review its activities in light of the results.

These indicators are by no means perfect and obviously lack critical dimensions chief among which absence of personal security, of political freedom. But until a more comprehensive indicator can be developed HDI and HPI could well be useful in assessing effectiveness of long lasting humanitarian aid operations. This would oblige humanitarian aid to adopt a sustainable attitude and possibly even contribute to shortening duration of operations.

2.4.3 Planning using effectiveness complexity indicator

Ex ante effectiveness is the initial objective of humanitarian aid. The effectiveness level depends on information about the situation which is not always readily available

[61] UNDP "Rapport.. 1994", op cit., p. 97
[62] UNDP, "Human 1997", op. cit. p.18.

or very precise. Therefore *ex ante* effectiveness is a projection of what can initially be accomplished at the beginning of a humanitarian aid intervention. This is understandable due to the fact that precise numbers of victims, exact needs, scope and extent of humanitarian aid required cannot be known beforehand, nor will humanitarian aid await precise information before acting. Estimation is therefore sufficient at that stage.

But events do not unfold as a linear progression after a disaster. Situations are therefore not static, but dynamic. As such the true impact (or real effectiveness) of an operation depends on a series of variables which normally change and shift in time. Some of the variables are related to demographic data (mortality, birth rates, migrations, population movements, etc.), while others are operational constraints : level and extent of resources (material, logistics, manpower), and available funding.

Obviously given the above constraints *ex ante* effectiveness will hardly be equal to *ex post* effectiveness. But the first can be used as a planning tool, while the second is the real impact measurement of humanitarian aid, once the operation has finalized.

One can therefore build a **humanitarian aid complexity indicator** based on compared effectiveness levels (*ex ante* and *ex post*), based on four elements : the extent of needs (i.e. the number of victims), mortality and death toll, the length of the operation (in months), and the costs of the operation. This could be written as ***I c = I exa / I exp***, where ***I c*** is the effectiveness complexity indicator, ***I exa*** is the *ex ante* effectiveness indicator (projected) and ***I exp*** is *ex post* effectiveness. The relation between *projected effectiveness* and *real effectiveness* allows to monitor the evolution of the situation. The closer ***I c*** to 1 (imaginary case where *ex ante* and *ex post* effectiveness coincide), the closer the projection to reality. On the contrary, the farther ***I c*** from 1, the larger the difference (more complex situations, such as unseen multiple crises).

Ideally these indicators should be kept monthly, and not only once at the beginning (ex ante) and once at the end (ex post) of operations. This would allow to graphically represent and follow the trend of the monthly effectiveness complexity indicator, which indicates where a situation may be improving (***I c*** converging towards 1 or higher if estimates are higher than reality) or where a situation may be worsening (***I c*** lower than 1, real needs higher than estimates).

Such an indicator has naturally its drawbacks. To be valid, data must be available, collected, analyzed and monitored. If this is not possible, at the very least, one should compared the initial *ex ante* projection with the real *ex post* results, as a method for analyzing how estimates could be improved to converge with real impact. But in large-scale emergencies keeping a monthly monitoring of the effectiveness indicator is necessary.

2.5 Efficiency in humanitarian aid : an example

Humanitarian aid is surrounded by an aura of philanthropy, which makes it intrinsically good and useful. Helping humanity by alleviating human misery and suffering would be the most important aspect, while other aspects are only a secondary concern. In other words, means and methodology used to provide humanitarian aid are less important than the mere act of providing it. Examples abound where communities or neighborhoods spontaneously have organized solidarity campaigns after shocking images of a disaster have been divulged in the

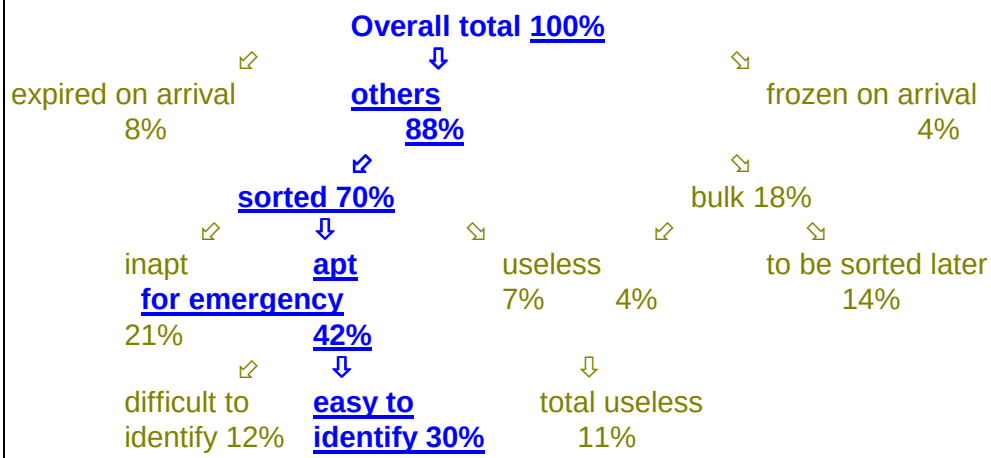
media. These actions range from food and clothes collection to convoys bringing the supplies closer to the affected (quite frequent in Sarajevo during its siege) and include of course monetary contributions to various funds or NGOs.

Alas good intentions are not enough. Solidarity campaigns do not guarantee that goods collected will efficiently meet the needs of those affected. Worse, solidarity campaigns can be inadequate and even go against the interests of those it is supposed to help. Humanitarian aid becomes then a non-sense causing prejudice instead of helping those affected. The following example goes to show that popular goodwill may not be enough to help disaster victims. As humanitarian aid becomes both more complex and a more frequent player in disasters around the globe, so must its means and methods be adapted to circumstances, following a case specific methodology which will respect humanitarian aid ethics while deploying adequate celerity and effectiveness. It must thus become more professional and more concerned about its impact and *modus operandi* than on the visibility of its actions.

Hereunder is an example of deficient humanitarian aid : drug collection (a part of which was given by pharmaceutical companies) after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. Monetary donations to specialized organizations instead of organizing a drug collection could have allowed for a more efficient operation. In any case, MSF would surely not have had to purchase an incinerator to burn all dangerous, useless and expired drugs.

All information comes from the same article.[63]

The international drug collection organized for emergency humanitarian aid in Armenia following the December 7, 1988 earthquake amounted to more than 5,000 metric tons, for a total value of over US$ 55 millions. Of this quantity, it was only possible to use 30 percent immediately, while 11 percent was made up of useless drugs (inadequate) and 8 percent were expired. Worse, by the end of 1989, 20 percent of all drugs collected had been destroyed. The total was composed of medical supplies (15%), drugs (65%) and IVs (intravenous, 20%).



One problem has been the packing and labels used. In four warehouses of Erevan antibiotics could be found with 238 different names and presentations, written in 21 languages, and of which only one third indicated the generic name on the package.

[63] The Lancet, June 9, 1990, collective article "Viewpoint : Drug supply in the aftermath of the 1988 Armenian earthquake", p. 1388 to 1390.

Loss of time and money related to collection, transport, reception and sorting of inadequate drugs amounting to 70% of the whole has lowered efficiency of humanitarian aid. **This examples shows two things : that in kind donations are not enough to guarantee the success of a humanitarian aid operation. Donations must be adapted to the specific nature of the situation (it must meet specific local needs) both in terms of contents and external appearance (dosage, packing, labeling) to be useful to beneficiaries.** It must be reminded that Armenians do not use the roman alphabet….

The second points is that a successful humanitarian aid intervention (efficient and effective) requires a careful and adequate preparation of means and resources used at every step of the process until final delivery of products and services to beneficiaries has been made. *As such, timing of incoming relief flights needs to be better organized. Since priorities tend to shift quickly in emergencies, incoming flights from far away donating countries may still unload essential drugs when the priority has shifted to construction of temporary housing and sanitation.* In other words, popular goodwill and spontaneous collection campaigns are not enough to guarantee a sound humanitarian aid operation. The result will depend as much on preparation and professional level of organizations participating in the operation than on the adequacy of resources provided to said organizations.

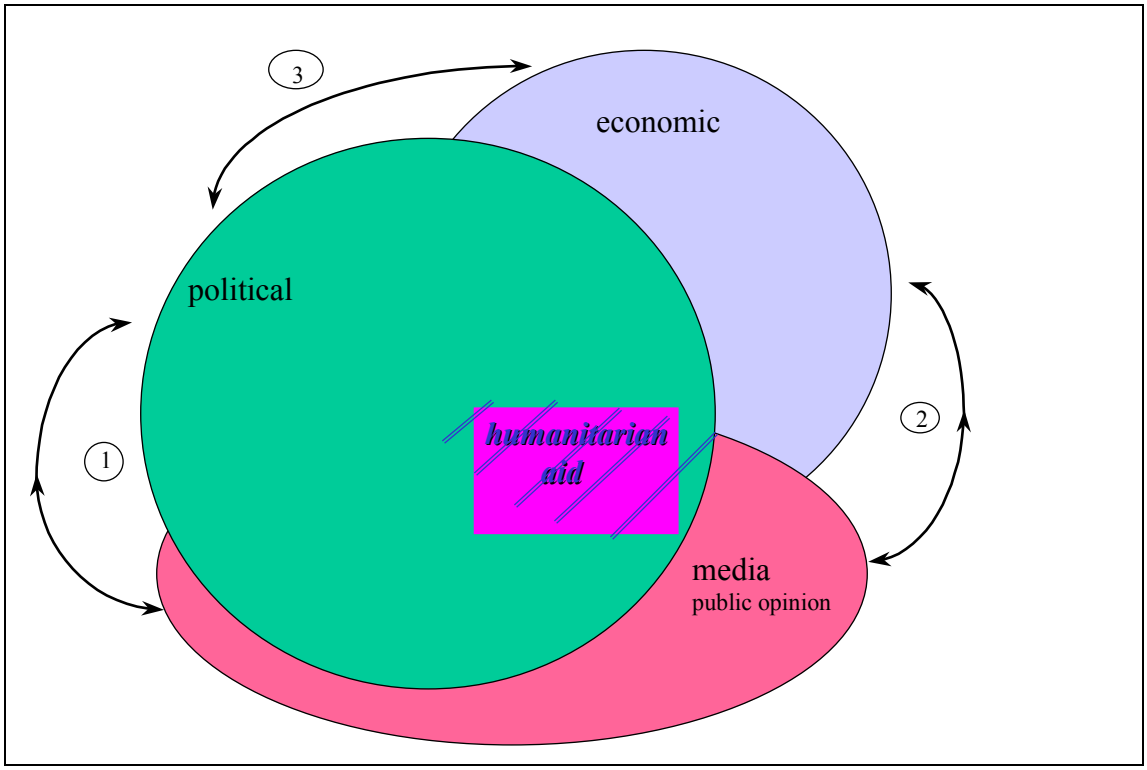
Humanitarian aid must become even more professional, and efforts are made in the right direction. As an example, the Spanish Red Cross created a filtering system for donations after hurricane Mitch struck Central America in November 1998 to ensure that only those in-kind donations which were adapted to the needs would be accepted. Equally PAHO (the United Nations Pan American Health Organization) quickly posted on the Internet the list of needs in the medical sector in order to avoid a repetition of the Armenia quake mistakes.
Unfortunately not all donors acted so professionally and some still preferred to play the card of media visibility (departing airplanes from European countries with questionable priority cargoes).

CHAPTER THREE. CONTENTS, LIMITS AND DEFINITION OF HUMANITARIAN AID : A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. A conceptual framework for humanitarian aid

1.1. Three spheres of influence of humanitarian aid.

Three major spheres of influence characterize humanitarian aid's environment : politics, economics and media/public opinion.



NB. The size (and shape) of each sphere is not a measure of importance of each factor on humanitarian aid, nor that of the specific weight of each factor.

1.1.1 The first sphere of influence, politics, represents not only the political situation in the country where humanitarian aid is taking place (e.g. that of the host country) but equally that of countries which have a direct interest in the host country. To analyze humanitarian aid in Rwanda in 1994, one must not only know the role of the government and of opposition parties (civilian and military), but equally the internal and external political situation of neighboring countries (Zaire, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, etc.) and the position of regional powers such as Belgium, France, England and the United States, in addition to Rwanda's political strategy in regards to each. All in all such an analysis requires extensive knowledge of the *regional situation* in the Great Lakes and of how regional powers may try to use a country in crisis in order to extend their sphere of influence (shifting allegiances and alliances). So this sphere comprises all geopolitical and its subservient military factors (including strategic considerations, military and defense, foreign policy, diplomacy, questions deemed "of national interest", etc.) which may exert either a direct or an indirect influence on the politico-military situation of the host country.

In order to understand events which lead to a humanitarian aid operation, it may be advisable to study the regional geopolitical situation as well as possessing some historical knowledge of the events which have affected the region.
Often humanitarian aid workers have been criticized by politicians for making alarming public statements about impending crisis without having much knowledge of the situation, only contributing to exacerbate existing tensions. To paraphrase one diplomat : knowledge of life-saving techniques does not entail prophetic nor political analysis capabilities.[64]

An essential element as part of the political sphere are human rights (HR) and IHL (International Humanitarian Law). Because there is no international institution with a mandate and real power to enforce human rights and IHL, violations and abuses are committed in all impunity in many countries. As such HR and IHL cannot be placed into a separate sphere (i.e. international jurisdiction, or IHL), but must remain a part of political decision making process. But the world's governments have a moral responsibility to ensure the respect of human rights and IHL. In today's global environment, where isolation is the exception and integration the norm, interaction among countries may provide a forum where international decisions may influence events within a given country.

Different actions with various degrees of success can be taken to defend human rights and IHL. Some of these positive or negative actions may be of military nature (such as peace making, peace keeping, warfare, commando actions, etc.), others political (cooperation agreements, support to specific political parties, "carrot and stick policy", threats, etc.), and yet others economic (sanctions, embargo, boycott, or grants, international loans, foreign assistance, etc.). In general actions taken include a combination of these factors.

While human rights and IHL are a fundamental part of humanitarian aid, abundant literature on the subject already exists. Legal and political considerations have attracted the lion's share of attention in humanitarian aid, whereas little analysis of another major sphere of influence has been made : economics. This book intends to show the importance of economic factors and interests in humanitarian aid and humanitarian assistance. Notwithstanding the urgent need to incorporate and extend the application of human rights and IHL worldwide.

In natural disasters

In natural disasters the political sphere also exists, although external influences may not prove as destabilizing as in conflict situations. Therefore in non-conflict disasters uncertainty and insecurity are reduced. However, the political situation should be closely monitored since social reconstruction and rehabilitation policies and programs ultimately may well depend on local politicians in democracies. And in many cases, the amount of official development assistance received may well depend on political relations between the affected country and major donor countries, as part of global geopolitics. Not to mention additional external funding which can be obtained according to the degree of exposure in the international media.

1.1.2 The second sphere of influence is economics. In addition to funding and costs of humanitarian aid, this sphere includes the whole of (often conflicting) economic interests of parties directly involved in a disaster (private groups, countries, arms industry, transnational companies, international and local economy) at all levels

[64] Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, "La diplomatie pyromane", Calmann-Lévy, 1996, p. 97.

(macro, meso and micro). Economics aspects of humanitarian aid have been largely ignored on the grounds that geopolitical decisions do not follow an economic rationale. While this is true, and politicians do not take decisions solely on economic grounds, we will see nonetheless throughout the book that economics plays a much greater role than what was originally thought, and can influence or even determine some, if not all, decisions.

1.1.3 The third sphere of influence is the media and public opinion. Media coverage of disasters and conflicts is important for humanitarian aid because in a global world instant information can prove a valuable asset. Shocking images may raise awareness of public opinion, which can exert influence on politicians (first arrow) to take adequate action to support humanitarian aid. At the same time shocking images of distress and misery call for solidarity, and media coverage ensures funding for humanitarian aid (second arrow). So sound and professional media coverage may well facilitate humanitarian aid.

But media coverage is a delicate tool, which can also be abused. In humanitarian jargon, the CNNers are those who believe that CNN is a prerequisite for a successful humanitarian action (or at least for obtaining an adequate level of resources). Too much media coverage may turn tragedy into a show. Remember the images of the literally hundreds of NGOs running around Goma with their logos, flags and banners on cars, T-shirts, tents, turning a dramatic situation into a humanitarian fair, just to ensure their visibility while competing among themselves to see who would obtain the longest media exposure?[65] So while media coverage is necessary, it may also be hazardous to humanitarian aid. Again it is a question for humanitarian aid agencies to do the job professionally. Opportunism should not be a guiding principle for humanitarian organizations.

Media are a useful if difficult partner for humanitarian aid. Instant media coverage has advantages as well as drawbacks. While initially media coverage of humanitarian aid may be positive, audience -and not support to humanitarian aid- is the primary objective of the media. When a crisis occurs, it may make headlines news for a few days, rarely for weeks, never for months. Why? Because no matter how gruesome the images, human beings have a level of tolerance which rises as exposure to shocks increase. In other words, the same images of a mass grave are more striking the first day of television than on the tenth consecutive day. Acute distress must be exceptional. It is sad to say so, but too long coverage of a crisis may cause a certain boredom among the audience, which in turn may translate into what is called “donor fatigue” when humanitarian aid extends itself over long periods. The media and public opinion have a general but short term interest in crisis situations. As a result, longer lasting crisis continue worldwide, forgotten by all but a few (East Timor, Sudan until summer 1998 when the conflict again made headlines given famine in South Sudan).

Also, media crisis coverage is selective, with greater focus given in those situations where human suffering is most apparent and spectacular, turning misery into show. But as a result, crisis where external symptoms of pain, violence, cruelty and abuse are not as widespread, and may therefore not be captured by a cameraman, may possibly not be covered (example East Timor until August 1999 when the referendum for autonomy or independence is to be held). The same is valid for those countries or situations in which media are censored or media access is limited or denied. Absence of media coverage does not mean that all is well. Because of the close link between media coverage and funding available for humanitarian aid,

[65] Ibid., p. 94. In 1994 at one point 270 NGOs were operating from Rwanda.

humanitarian aid must not fall into the trap of focusing only on spectacular crises. Its responsibilities do not depend on media exposure and go well beyond sensational information. The following three quotes[66] are used to illustrate the relation between media and humanitarian aid :
"A small dehydrating body is no news. Its takes thousands of deaths to make the headlines" (Galtung, 1991).
"When in the United States television showed starving Somali children, public opinion supported the sending of troops to protect relief warehouses. When television showed the image of a United States soldier dragged by the crowd, the same public opinion demanded the withdrawal of troops" (Toffler, 1994).
Bauman (1994) asks "Why the Armenia earthquake of December 1998 caused such widespread mobilization of public opinion and the media, when during that same year 250,000 people had died of slow death given famine and war in Sudan?"

But if humanitarian aid may at times be able to use media to mobilize public opinion, it is by no means alone in attempting to do so. Governments have also their interest and in some cases may attempt to use the media to assuage public concern (Gulf War and assistance to Kurds). While media exposure will undoubtedly translate into additional funding for humanitarian aid, there is always a risk that the way information is reported may run contrary to humanitarian interests.

In today's world in which technology allows for immediate coverage of events worldwide, we take for granted that immediacy is what determines sound information coverage. But it is impossible to understand events, giving a critical analysis of the situation while giving immediate coverage of an event. As a result the type of information we receive are monochrome instant pictures of situations which we do not even understand. Allegedly pictures and interviews are self-explanatory. This allows for manipulation of the information according to special interests, since images and interviews are what makes the news irrespective of the context. Assuming that instantaneous reporting is the paradigm of medial professionalism is simply a mistake. What independent media professionals offer to the public is a critical analysis of the situation which allows the public to make up its own mind. Not to be spoon-fed with images of human suffering while being told what to think about the political and military actions undertaken, as a means to ensure continued public opinion support.

A little anecdote : comparing human and natural efficiency[67]

"…conventionally we accept that the shortest -or most efficient- route between two points is a straight line. Nevertheless, when the Cauca river crosses the same geographical area, it does not follow a straight path. On the contrary : it forms all kinds of whimsical curves, ripples, meanders". …"the efficiency of rivers is not to get faster from one point to another, but, precisely, in maintaining under control the water flow, in guaranteeing a regular distribution of its sediments, in irrigating in its path the widest possible area. For rivers it is no so important to carry water to a specific point (the product), as is the path which has been followed in order to meet that objective (the process)".

The lack of professional media coverage despite an impressive display of resources was particularly evident in the NATO offensive against Serbia in spring 1999. Rarely

[66] Hegoa/Mugarik Gabe Nafarroa, "Bajo el mismo techo. Para comprender un mundo global"., Pamplona, 1996.
[67] From G. Wilches-Chaux, "Auge, Caída y Levantada de Felipe Pinillo, mecánico y soldador", LA RED Peru, Editorial Delta, Ecuador, 1998, p. 79.

have so many media been covering an event with so little to report and with almost no direct sources. Only refugees' tales were heard, but no a single media correspondent was present in Kosovo during the 77 days that the NATO offensive lasted. This shows that worldwide public opinion can be fairly easily controlled by the media which no longer provide information but serve special interests to create public opinion support for the operation. Not only were Serb information reports not broadcast in NATO countries (dismissed as allegedly unreliable and biased) but NATO was able to exert total control of the information about the war. A good example of how easily the media can be used by politico-military interests.

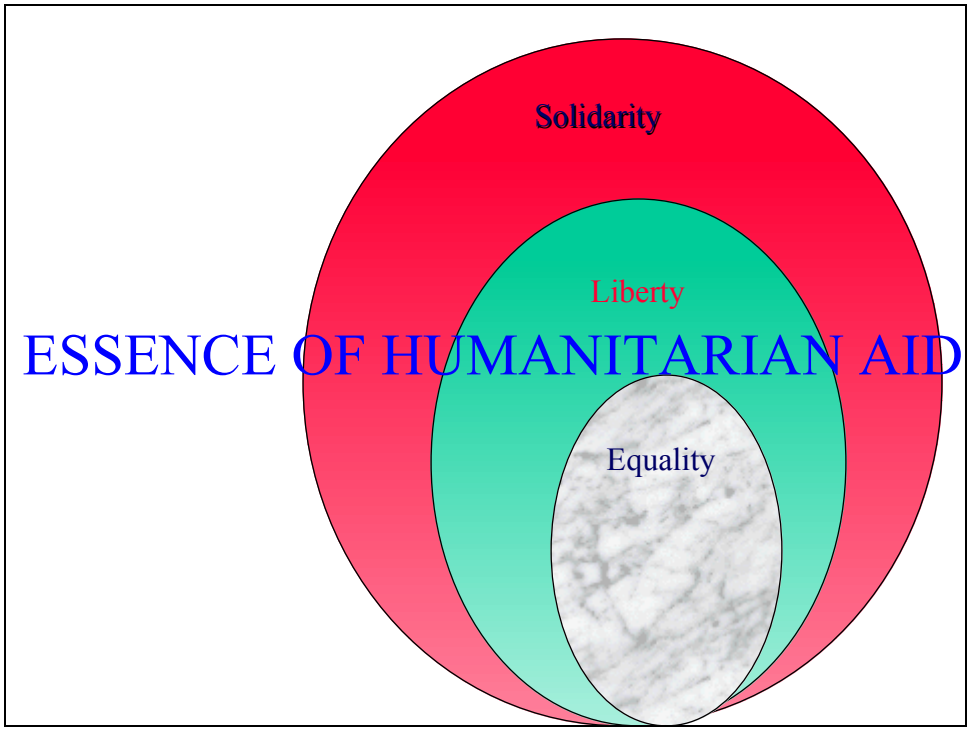
It would be simplistic to consider that relations between spheres are one-way relations. Obviously, it is a mix of these interdependent relations which form the environment in which humanitarian aid must operate. Between social and political factors, economic factors, media and public opinion, the relation is one of dependency (one sphere may not survive without interacting with the others), and influence (trying to change and influence the other spheres).

In this complex environment, there are no passive observers. Humanitarian aid agencies and organizations contribute as much into shaping the spheres of influence as they are similarly affected by them. The difficulty lies in reaching a balance between the three spheres which allows for an adequate implementation of humanitarian aid. And that is no easy feat, considering the number of existing conflicting and hidden interests which seek to manipulate humanitarian aid and convert it into an instrument into the hands of specific interest groups (essentially in the political sphere).

1.2 Essence of humanitarian aid

After seeing the difficult relation between the operating environment and humanitarian aid, it is equally important to see the essence of humanitarian aid. What it is, and what lies behind the two words "humanitarian aid". There is undoubtedly a part of idealism, even of romantic conception, at the heart of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian aid is the expression of a mix of emotions, goodwill and even sacrifice, with intangible aspects which are more related to Jungian psychology of collective unconscious and archetypes than with any material or logical arguments.

Humanitarian aid agencies and organizations have never made fortunes from their interventions, while sometime assuming risks well beyond what would appear as reasonable. The consequences have been in extreme cases severe psychological injuries (such as the ICRC expatriate staff in Rwanda in 1994 after witnessing how their local staff were slaughtered in front of their eyes) or at times the deliberate targeting of humanitarian staff (such as the UNHCR staff killed by a grenade explosion in Kirundo, Burundi, in 1994). The visible part of humanitarian aid has to do with the assistance provided to disaster and conflict victims, although motivations of humanitarian aid staff are not visible. They are nonetheless just as important, for humanitarian aid would not exist without people willing to assist fellow human beings in need. Again it may be useful to use a drawing as illustration :



All three words are inspired by a humanistic vision of mankind, the same humanism which constitutes the very essence of humanitarian aid, underlining its philanthropic nature. But do these terms really reflect the nature of humanitarian aid?

Solidarity implies empathy and sympathy towards the people affected by disasters. In simpler words, solidarity marks the difference between the people who remain emotionally unscathed and indifferent to disasters (affecting others) and those who wish to do something to alleviate the suffering of disaster victims. Among this minority the largest part will contribute through cash or in-kind donations to succour victims through some local or international organisation, while others will want to take a pro-active role in assistance operations (joining the Red Cross, the Peace Corps, working for NGOs, community social services, church groups, etc.). So solidarity marks a borderline between those who care and are willing to do something alleviate human suffering and those who won't.

Solidarity also implies the recognition of the imbalance in resource allocation world-wide and the willingness to contribute from one's own in order to redress the situation (either through time allocated on volunteer basis, work realised or financial support). Solidarity is caring, compassion and sharing. In short solidarity forms the backbone of humanitarian aid.

Liberty is undoubtedly an indispensable element of humanitarian aid. There are several types of liberties : liberty of the fraternal individual to choose its means for providing humanitarian aid (cash, in-kind, personal involvement), liberty of those working in disaster front-lines to be physically present to assist disaster victims despite at times exposing themselves to considerable peril. Liberty is an individual choice as to the manner in which solidarity will be expressed.

But most importantly, for disaster victims, liberty is a fundamental right. It is the right to receive timely disaster assistance without any hindrance. It is the universally recognised and overruling right to unimpeded, unbiased and impartial access to

assistance for disaster victims. Without representing any specific interests or a hidden agenda other than that of providing effective assistance.

Liberty is also the choice of how much and for how long assistance will be provided by humanitarian aid players. While the level and duration of assistance should normally be set essentially on the basis of the victims' needs, at times humanitarian aid continues much beyond its primary objective simply due to the absence of any other form of assistance and becomes a chronic illness by institutionalising its presence. Originally a blessing, it may become a curse.

Equality determines how humanitarian aid should be given. Not only does equality oblige humanitarian aid actors to assist all and every single victim without discrimination (of age, sex, race, ethnic background, religious convictions or any other kind of differentiation among disaster victims) as an essential premise of humanitarian aid, but it also reminds those who assist disaster victims that all human beings are equal, no matter their birthplace, the colour of their skin, their social, religious or political beliefs, or their level of culture, of education, or any other similar aspect by which people can be qualified.

In other words, expert foreign technical staff are no different in human terms than local staff and disaster victims. Because of the essentially philanthropic nature of humanitarian aid, human relations should therefore strive to maintain equality between people of different cultures/background by showing mutual respect and understanding. This has often been forgotten by expatriate staff working overseas, consequently with the negative "patronising" attitude adopted by foreigners.

Humanitarian aid workers are not "better" than local staff or disaster victims. They are merely different and possess different skills and techniques, but they do not by any means necessarily uphold better moral values or posses the Universal Truth. So equality among the international staff should also translate by greater humility when dealing with people and situations with which one is not too familiar.

Last but perhaps most important, equality is also the belief that each and every life is fundamentally given the same importance and should be preserved by all available means. For those of us who believe that "all individuals are equal" and that there is no greater good than giving the opportunity to a human being to pursue life with dignity, humanitarian assistance constitutes almost a natural choice.

In the history of humanity various political systems have existed or have been experienced at one point in time. Theocracies, autocracies, monarchies, plutocracies, oligarchies, dictatorships, tyrannies are but a few of the government structures which have been tried or are still being used in some countries today.
Yet countries which experience the highest level of human development, as defined by the United Nations Development Programme, and in which individual access to opportunities is greater, all share a common form of government : democracy.
Yet these countries represent a meagre twenty percent of the current world population[68]. So in mathematical terms, the probability for a new-born to come to life in one of these privileged countries is even less than twenty percent, given the comparatively lower fertility rate of the rich industrial countries in relation to that of developing countries. For every baby born in a rich industrial country, more than four others will see the light in countries where their chance of blossoming into a full-grown individuals will be severely hampered by lack of comparable opportunities.

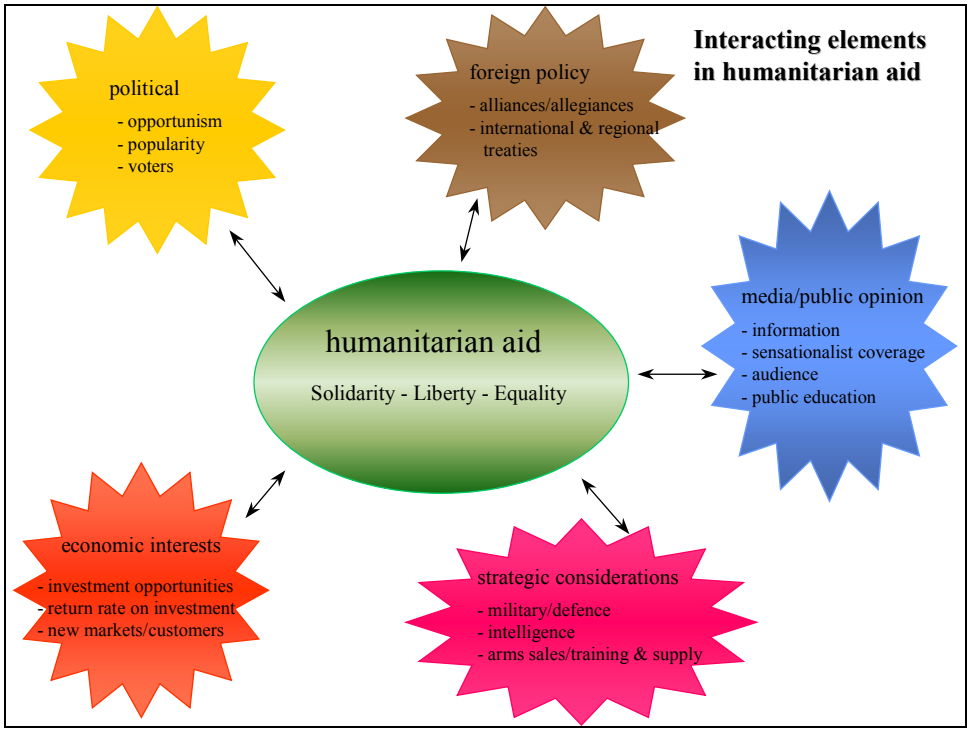
[68] UNDP, "Human Development Report 1997", op. cit.

And yet this is only comparing actual figures. If one was to stretch comparison to the previous three-thousand years of human history, the chance for anyone to be born in a rich country at the end of the second millennium becomes an infinitesimal probability which only underlines the incredible luck the dwellers of rich countries have. Rather than a slave during the Classical period, or as peasant farmer or soldier during medieval times, or yet as a twenty hours per day factory worker during the industrial revolution, we were bred and are living in an environment which allows us to pursue our individual aspirations with comparatively little limitation.

This is why we, in turn, must contribute to expanding opportunity levels to other countries in which the population has not been as fortunate. As a member of the privileged few, we must strive to widen the circle of opportunities. Hence the idealistic vision in humanitarian aid, which must be maintained and fomented.
This is why we need “humanitarian politics”, resulting from the combination of three previously discussed factors of solidarity, liberty, and equality, not merely as a saying but as a guiding principle for all actions.

Another psychological component which is not an integral part of humanitarian aid but at times plagues certain humanitarian aid staff is that of excess idealism. This particular characteristic is normally found among new staff without previous field experience. It is the belief that humanitarian aid staff embodies the intrinsic good and therefore that humanitarian aid should be seen as the most important element of the environment, more than politics, economics or media, given its objective to save and preserve lives. This overruling concern places humanitarian aid well above apparently more trivial considerations. As a consequence there is a belief that all human beings should facilitate or contribute to the implementation of humanitarian aid, rather than delaying or impeding it. Unfortunately this is not so in real life : even if saving lives may be more important than other considerations, there is no consensus on this issue. Indeed if there was, there would be no more wars or conflicts. So new staff have to realise that operating conditions of humanitarian aid are never optimal and that many limitations apply. Conditions may at times be made deliberately negative to avoid humanitarian aid to take place. Many interests which are not of a humanitarian nature contribute to creating the operating environment.
Sometimes NGOs make this same mistake out of arrogance, and forget that as seen from the parties in conflict, humanitarian aid is but one element of the equation, but by no means the most important. In these cases the vulnerability of the staff is seriously increased. Operating conditions are determined by the balance of the three spheres of influence, in which humanitarian aid is only one of the elements. If it is to be more widely respected, it must interact in the three spheres in such a way that its objectives are also given greater importance by each sphere.

1.2.1 Humanitarian politics : an introduction



At first glance it may seem contradictory to mix politics with philanthropy, as the two do not seem to match. And yet that is exactly why humanitarian politics is a necessity : because of all possible considerations which enter into a political analysis in order to take a decision on foreign policy matters, human suffering comes as miserable last, if it is even considered at all.

We have seen previously within the political sphere some of the so-called “essential” considerations. Decisions taken depend on a series of key factors, chief among which :

- strategic considerations (including military, defence and intelligence interests, arms sales, military training and supply, etc.)
- political opportunism (how a decision will affect the electorate -future polls and elections- and the government’s popularity)
- foreign policy (including alliances and allegiances with host government and regional governments, treaties and commitments to multilateral or regional organisations such as the United Nations, the OAU, the OAS, the OSCE, etc. including military organisations such as NATO)
- economic interests (return rate on the investment, lobby groups, export opportunities, new markets, etc.)
- media (how information may be used to convince public opinion and obtain public support for the decision).

There is little room for “humanitarian politics” in this already complex mix of elements. But none of these has even considered the question of alleviating human suffering. At best strategic considerations will incorporate the number of casualties in case of military action (essentially from the point of view of the “good guys” exposure to risk only), but *a political decision about humanitarian aid largely avoids the*

essential issue of alleviating human suffering, as if saving lives was only a secondary issue. This is where "humanitarian politics" become necessary. At least one country (the USA) has openly recognized that humanitarian aid is just one more instrument of foreign policy, just as USAID actions have been a bridge for US business abroad. In the European Union, this has not yet happened, maybe simply because there is no common foreign policy amongst member states. But bilateral assistance may at times strongly differ from UE or UN multilateral assistance, which clearly shows diverging interests among European nations (Ex-Yugoslavia, Great Lakes). If humanitarian aid wants to preserve some independence and maintain some degree of credibility, it must give itself the tools to meet its objectives despite governments' hidden agendas.

Governments have always had their personal agendas regarding other nations. They are, by definition, essential players in conflicts and on the world scene, involved from the start in defending their specific interests. Their objectives, according to the decision-making process summarised above, have nothing to do with philanthropy. Their foreign policies may be strong or weak, effective or ineffective, their analysis accurate or inaccurate, but their decisions are clearly taken in consideration of objectives overriding any humanitarian concern.

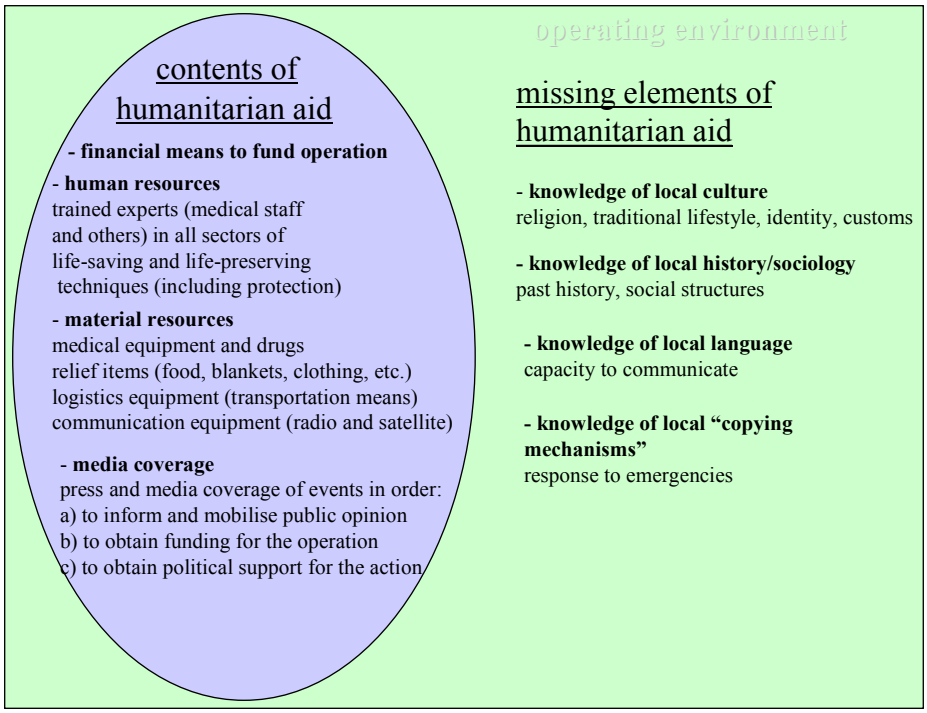
Because foreign policy decisions are essentially taken irrespective of humanitarian needs, "humanitarian politics" require an aggressive campaign to offset the hidden and arbitrary process with which government decisions are taken in cases where human lives are at stake. First and foremost, NGOs and other humanitarian aid organisations, together with civil society should insist that Human Rights principles be respected and applied world-wide. The same as the international campaign for the prohibition of land-mines proved a brilliant success (despite the non-ratification of the treaty by some of the major mine producing countries, such as the United States), a similar wide-ranging campaign should be undertaken in order :

a) to promote increased public opinion awareness, leading in turn to increased mobilisation and pressures on government to incorporate humanitarian objectives as priorities in decision making processes;
b) to strengthen non-governmental multilateral organisations (UN, regional organisations) on humanitarian and technical grounds only, restricting any military involvement except in cases of de-mining operations or nuclear, biological or chemical warfare
c) to increase NGO and humanitarian organisations influence as a check and balance system in order to ensure greater transparency of governments' foreign policy actions and ensure the application of humanitarian objectives.

In the end such a campaign should strive at demanding that governments around the world include humanitarian considerations as a major factor of the decision-making process in foreign policy. To this effect a panel of advisors from NGOs and humanitarian organisations should be appointed to each government (foremost among the major donor countries). All in the name of humanity. All in the name of solidarity, liberty and equality. Because humanitarian politics are essential for a more humane world into the next century. And that will be the subject of chapter six.

1.2.2. Contents of humanitarian aid

After seeing the different spheres of influence and their interaction on humanitarian aid, it is important to look at the contents of humanitarian aid.



Humanitarian aid contains a number of valuable elements, chief among which the *financial resources* necessary to carry out a humanitarian aid operation.
So the first element which allows humanitarian aid to exist is money. Without funds, nothing can be done. But money seems to possess a great deal of inertia, and delays may occur from the time that money is needed by humanitarian organizations in the field until the time it is disbursed by donors. This is why most organizations initially use their own funds to start up operations, without awaiting reception of pledges. Once initial start-up funds are available and an initial assessment is made, actual assistance may start.

The arrival on the disaster scene of specific *human and material resources* allows for the start of assistance to disaster victims. This requires adequate preparation to ensure that the assistance provided is in accordance with the victims needs and is fit for local conditions. It should always be preceded by a first phase normally called "initial field assessment" or "exploratory mission" or similar terms, which constitutes a first indispensable step prior to commencement of operations. Although to some people this may seem like a waste of time, yet it is of paramount importance in order to adequately assess the prevailing field conditions and to identify most urgent needs to be addressed. Failure in doing so might result in inadequate supplies or improper personnel being sent to the scene of operations. Other risks include duplication of on-going relief effort and creation of parallel structures. But most importantly, initial assessments are necessary to adequately prepare the actions which will be undertaken. A valid field assessment might decisively contribute to lowering mortality and death toll among disaster victims by ensuring that adequate and timely assistance is dispensed.

The arrival of *human resources* on the disaster scene, always in conjunction with *material resources* marks the beginning of life-saving and life-preserving operations.
Medical staff are always a part of emergency disaster assistance staff, but their category, number, function and specialty will always have to be adapted to the

context, as determined by the initial impact assessment. For example, in case of earthquakes, there may be a higher need for medical surgeons, given the large number of traumatic injuries, than in case of epidemics, which may require more public health specialists. In addition paramedical staff (such as water/sanitation engineers) may also play an important role in avoiding epidemics. In certain cases, nutritionists have a vital role to play in intensive feeding or therapeutic feeding centres. Together with adequate supplies of medical equipment and drugs, relief items, logistics and communication equipment, human resources are able to provide humanitarian assistance as needed.

In conflict situations, much less publicised but equally important are all those whose task it is to protect disaster victims. Known sometimes as "protection officers" or "protection delegates" these people have the very sensitive and difficult task to keep disaster victims as much as possible free from mental and physical harm and injury. While medical staff fights against death itself, protection workers have to deal with potential killers to refrain them from committing atrocities and abuses. In most cases, they have little to offer to the would-be executioners in exchange for the respect of disaster victims, since their main strength is based on International Humanitarian Laws and Human Rights (protection staff are often lawyers) and not on the use of force. So their success rests on dissuasion by persuasion. In simpler words, success is obtained when warring factions minimise the number of atrocities committed in the course of conflict. Ideally all atrocities should cease, but it may unfortunately not be a realistic objective. The lower the number of exaction and abuses, the higher the success of protection activities. The extremely sensitive nature of the task is enough to explain why so little publicity has been shed on this activity. It is very difficult to determine the extent of its effectiveness, but much easier to determine its failure (the protected enclave of Srebrenica in Bosnia and Hercegovina, refugee camps in Eastern Zaire - Kinsangani, Tingi-Tingi, Ubundu). Sometimes the peril lays amongst disaster victims themselves (some refugee camps in North and South Kivu in 1995-96 were controlled by former FAR soldiers and Interhamwe militia). In these cases protection may be even more difficult.

Another difficulty is the causality between protection activities and absence of abuses[69]. While in medicine it is widely recognised that a life was saved thanks to a medical intervention (regardless of the type of activity), causality between pathology and treatment determines that cure is brought essentially by medical intervention. Not so in protection activities. Because humanitarian aid takes place in an operating environment that includes political pressures on the host country (or warring faction) from major governments, it is difficult to asses precisely the specific weight of humanitarian protection in avoiding abuse. Most likely, protection is the result of a series of converging elements, such as humanitarian presence, humanitarian protection as well as political pressures and other foreign policy instruments. This makes the evaluation of protection activities a most complex issue which has yet to be solved.

Fortunately or unfortunately, media play an essential role in humanitarian operations. Experience has demonstrated that the level of funding for a humanitarian operation may be commensurate with the level of media exposure, which in turns foments public opinion's empathy towards disaster victims and puts added pressure on governments to do something to address the issue. This automatically raises the level of funds available to humanitarian aid players. While in unspectacular disasters the media are not always present, in large-scale highly visible disasters the media are involved almost from the beginning (Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, etc.). Thus media

[69] See point 1.3.4, chapter 4 for an explanation of causality in humanitarian aid

are indispensable in large-scale disasters and form an uneasy but valuable component of humanitarian aid contents.

But no matter how well-meaning, humanitarian aid is not flawless. It is also necessary to recognise its weaknesses in order to improve its professionalism.
A series of elements are also missing in humanitarian aid, chief among which may at times be the ability to communicate with the victims because of missing language skills. This is a fundamental aspect since both needs assessment and evaluation of humanitarian assistance should be performed together with the participation of beneficiaries. Communication ability is thus essential. In some cases the use of local interpreters may be a solution, while in others local interpreters may run increased personal security risks (such as in Bosnia). The best solution is that whenever possible expatriate human resources possess the necessary language skills.

Another missing element in humanitarian aid is the knowledge of the local culture, its social and political system, religion, and traditions. When expatriate staff arrived in Somalia, in Rwanda/Burundi or in Bosnia to provide humanitarian assistance, very few had had previous in-country experience. As a result and although it may be done with a good intention, the attitude of expatriate staff may at times be counterproductive, only if by ignorance of local customs and traditions. At worst the attitude or behaviour of expatriate staff might even prove offensive to local population, in which case expatriate staff should perhaps accept to sacrifice some of their habits in order to better adapt to the environment.

Finally another important point is that humanitarian assistance tends to overlook the local copying mechanisms that local population traditionally use in case of emergencies. Local copying mechanisms may be weak or appear ineffective or antiquated, but they nevertheless always exist. Humanitarian aid should strive to incorporate traditional copying mechanisms into its response for three reasons :

1) As a means of ensuring local community participation,
2) As a potential for improved local response capacity,
3) As a participatory, bottom-up methodology which seeks to build upon existing structures rather than creating a parallel structure undermining and setting aside traditional response mechanisms.

1.3. The need for an operational definition

Initially we have seen that objectives of humanitarian aid were that of human survival and protection, all within a humanistic and philanthropic vision to alleviate human suffering and misery. As such humanitarian aid was primarily concerned with immediate to short-term operations. However we have also seen that in some cases (Salvadoran refugees in Honduras, Rwandan refugees in Zaire) humanitarian aid has undertaken life-preserving activities stretching into longer-term operations, partly in order to provide protection to the beneficiaries. But we have also seen how fragile and relative protection is, having seen its limits in some examples (Bosnia, Great Lakes). All in all, humanitarian aid has been present in very different situations and very different scenarios. As such its activities have been extended well outside the initial immediate life-saving assistance to encompass sustainable life-preserving activities.

While “humanitarian aid” is a term widely used and abused, searching for a definition bring edifying results : there is no precise universal definition of humanitarian aid. Not only are dictionaries of little help, but even among the United Nations organizations there is no consensual definition of humanitarian aid. Among NGOs

and other specialized organizations, there are numerous but inadequate definitions by each organization. **It seems as though each definition is made to fit best with the specific activities of said organization. There is no attempt to find a common consensual definition to be used as reference, but rather an endeavor to justify the use of the "humanitarian aid" label by each organization.** Even using the Internet yields no precise definition. Among donors, definitions of humanitarian aid only give broad political lines of conduct, but do not answer precisely the question.[70]

Finally an academic search for a definition is equally unsatisfactory. Maybe because humanitarian aid as such has never been considered as a worthwhile academic subject. Among those books which deal with development and emergency aid, specifics of humanitarian aid are recognized, but no one cares to give a clear definition.

So while hundreds of millions of US dollars are spent each year on humanitarian aid operations, there is still no agreed definition of humanitarian aid.

Out of four emblematic humanitarian organizations contacted in 1996 to obtain a definition (two of them UN agencies), only one cared to answer. Hereafter is ICRC's reply :
"Bosko Jakovljevic presents in "Elements of definition of humanitarian *assistance*" in the article of the Revue, September/October 1987 "The right to humanitarian *assistance* - Legal aspects", p. 491 :

"*There is no definition commonly accepted of humanitarian assistance.* …Humanitarian assistance should be an action resulting from extraordinary circumstances (for example in an emergency), in which commonly available services are not in a position to function adequately to meet the fundamental needs of the affected population".[71] The same article reads on p. 492 "Humanitarian assistance should be different from humanitarian ***protection*** which aims at …guaranteeing the respect of the rights of victims by those who violate fundamental human rights"[72].

Two comments emerge from this answer: one, that the article is already ten years old, and does not contemplate the "military humanitarian" actions which took place in Somalia, Ex-Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes. Second and most important, that what is being discussed is humanitarian *assistance*, and not humanitarian *aid.*

It is therefore necessary to clarify the difference between "aid" and "assistance"
"Aid" is much more generic and vague than "assistance". When applied to humanitarian actions, it could be said that humanitarian aid encompasses any and/or

[70] See for example for the European Union the Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996. While objectives and principles of humanitarian aid are given, an explicit definition is not. It is worth noting that article 1 states "The Community's humanitarian aid shall comprise assistance, relief and protection operations…..It shall do so for the time needed to meet the humanitarian requirements…" thereby clearly recognizing that humanitarian aid may extend well over the short term.
[71] The original text in French reads "Il n'existe pas de définition généralement admise de l'assistance humanitaire….L'assistance humanitaire devrait être une action déclenchée par des circonstances extraordinaires (par exemple en cas d'urgence), dans lesquelles les services habituels ne sont pas en mesure de fonctionner de manière appropriée pour faire face aux besoins fondamentaux de la population sinistrée".
[72] In French "L'assistance humanitaire devrait être distincte de la protection humanitaire qui vise …garantir le respect des droits des victimes par ceux qui violent les droits fondamentaux de l'homme".

all activities of the process leading to humanitarian assistance. Or one could say that humanitarian "assistance" is the logical conclusion of humanitarian "aid". So what does the word "assistance" bring that "aid" misses? ***Presence*** on the spot where relief goods and services are being given to beneficiaries. To "assist" comes from the Latin "assistere", which means *to stand by*, to help, to second[73]. In other words, humanitarian assistance is the bridge between humanitarian aid and beneficiaries.
Drug collection, maritime food shipments, donor funding are all part of humanitarian aid. But humanitarian assistance is only given by those agencies or organizations present directly among beneficiaries. **So assistance specifically covers the activities of humanitarian aid organizations present in the region which directly help the affected population.**

Humanitarian aid is a requisite for humanitarian assistance, but its impact depends on the assistance given. Since assistance is the critical part of the humanitarian aid process, which ultimately determines the effectiveness of the operation, the rest of the book will focus primarily on humanitarian assistance as a more specific form of humanitarian aid.

Two definitions need therefore to be made : one for humanitarian aid, the other for humanitarian assistance. The importance of these definitions lie not so much in the wording used as in attempting to establish commonly and generally accepted limits for each type of activity.

1.3.1. Two concepts of humanitarian aid.

There are really two concepts of humanitarian aid. The first, more restrictive, limits humanitarian aid to short term activities in connection with human survival and protection (i.e. life-saving and life-preserving activities in emergency relief only) This concept was traditionally used in humanitarian interventions during the seventies and early eighties. Humanitarian aid agencies and NGOs would do their part in the field of their technical capabilities, while responsibility for implementing the necessary rehabilitation and development measures were left up to governments and international donors. Much of the activities were related to health and medical activities, and interventions in Biafra and Bangladesh in the seventies marked the start of a number of new medical NGOs which would later become known as the French Doctors (initially MSF, later MDM, and even later other medical organizations started operations in humanitarian crises).The second, much broader, states that humanitarian aid may well extend beyond the short term into the medium to long term (i.e. "time needed" concept), and cover many components which are not directly related to human survival and protection (such as agricultural projects, income generating activities, reconstruction and rehabilitation, local capacity building), but could be a part of a comprehensive understanding of what life-preserving activities may cover. This trend has gradually become dominant in the last decade as increasing complexity and shifting conditions of humanitarian aid scenarios have required new strategies to meet the increasing expectations placed on humanitarian aid. The aim is a return to normalcy, looking at the resumption of development. This concept is no doubt much more comprehensive, and requires a phased, integrated, multisectoral approach, working closely with and complementing development activities. It is also more ambitious and laudable. It is also much more difficult to apply. Such an approach is indispensable in order to ensure a sustainable

[73] Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, Gramercy Books, Dilithium Press, New York, 1994, p. 90.

humanitarian aid and adequate hand-over (or gap-filling) with development activities. Taking a restrictive approach to humanitarian aid (as short term emergency life-saving activities only) may cause negative effects : for one, a precipitated withdrawal of humanitarian aid may leave uncovered gaps that development is unable to fill. Second, if there is no handing-over (or gap-filling) period between humanitarian aid and development and outstanding needs remain uncovered, stability may be jeopardized, and consequently a return to a crisis situation cannot be excluded. At the same time this current trend has its drawbacks, as humanitarian aid players become involved in activities in which they have neither the technical expertise nor the experience, which raises legitimate questions as to their added value and may even rest some credibility from certain NGOs which become more opportunistic than professional. In this new trend a serious analysis of private sector involvement should also be undertaken as a potential complement to humanitarian aid actors, even if with different objectives.
But similarly over-extended humanitarian aid may create just as dangerous negative effects such as aid dependency among beneficiaries, parallel structures (by-passing local government), distortion of local economy, draining of development funds, prioritizing and institutionalizing what in principle was only meant as a temporary solution to mitigate an extraordinary event.

Today humanitarian aid has become increasingly solicited in a wide range of activities well beyond its traditional life-saving role. As such it is necessary to differentiate both types of activities. Special emphasis needs to be placed in the second type of activities in order to articulate and streamline clearly how humanitarian aid and development can interact in this phase.

Humanitarian aid and development are two sides of the same coin, two aspects of the same process, and its objectives should be mutually reinforcing. The proposed definition and objectives follow therefore a comprehensive concept of humanitarian aid, as going beyond traditional emergency life-saving activities.

1.4 Proposed definitions of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian aid

Humanitarian assistance is initially an exceptional emergency relief action resulting from an unforeseen event, either natural or man-made, having disrupted the traditional environment of civilian populations in such a way that a short term intervention of specialized organizations is necessary.

This definition requires a few explanations. First, what is an “emergency relief action”? It is an activity undertaken immediately or as soon as possible after an event, by one or more individuals specially prepared, in order to save lives and alleviate physical and moral human suffering of those affected by the degradation of living conditions in their traditional environment.

What is an “unforeseen event”? It is an event which occurs suddenly, which had not been expected and for which no adequate early warning has been given. Unforeseen is not unforeseeable. It is possible to foresee a volcanic eruption or a flood (such *ability* does exist), but the precise moment when the event occurs is unforeseen. The same in Burundi, where there remains a risk that the internal situation may at any time degenerate into widespread hostilities between different groups. So violence is foreseeable, but the precise time-frame and extent of violence are unknown.

Whether the event is either “natural” (disaster or calamity according to typology of catastrophes[74]) or “man-made” (armed conflicts, rebellion, etc.[75]) humanitarian assistance applies to both types of situations.

What does “having disrupted the traditional environment” mean? A sudden and important change in common living conditions which impedes population to carry out their usual daily tasks and induces a modification of behavior to ensure survival. In case of conflicts, the cause may often be brutality, violence and physical abuse (including torture and rape), whereas in case of natural disasters, the cause of disruption is physical destruction which translates more in terms of loss of property and destitution.

What is a “short term intervention of specialized organizations”? It is an action which is *limited in time to three months at most per event.* It should be recognized that relief actions to supply basic minimum needs of the affected population can well be covered in such a lapse of time. In other words, three months are enough time to manage and bring a crisis under control. As for “specialized organizations”, these correspond to all organizations which have a special preparation in humanitarian assistance. It includes first and foremost local organizations, but also UN agencies, NGOs as well as other specific humanitarian organizations (Red Cross, etc.), and in some cases even government agencies (such as the Swiss Disaster Relief).

What should humanitarian assistance’s involvement become after the three months? Much depends on the situation. However, ideally, humanitarian aid should attempt to hand-over the control of relief operations to local organizations or institutions at the end of the emergency period. Once the crisis is under control (e.g. mortality and death-toll have returned to “normal” levels, life-saving activities being completed) and channels for provision of goods and services have been implemented, it is not necessary to maintain a humanitarian assistance presence only for logistics purposes. The quicker relief provision can be turned over to local organizations the better. Humanitarian assistance should then evolve towards a second type of activity, looking at the resumption of normalcy as its objective.

However not all crises are conducive for a hand-over of operations within a three months time-frame. In particular in case of conflicts where bellicose activities can last for months or even years in a given area or city (i.e. shelling and gunfire in the streets of Beirut during the early 80’s, or the siege of Sarajevo which started in 1992).

When and where possible, humanitarian assistance should seek to limit the bulk of its life-saving emergency activities to a period of three months at most, with a gradual hand-over of all relief activities to local organizations**.**

Humanitarian assistance activities should therefore ideally include training of local counterparts in all areas of relief activities as needed (i.e. logistics and food distribution, medical and nutritional surveillance, sanitation, etc.). From

[74] “A natural disaster can be defined as an event causing at least 100 victims, of which at least 10 dead”. UNDP, Rapport, p. 31, box 2.4.

[75] “Collective rebellions exist when groups belonging to other communities than the State arm themselves, organize more than 1,000 combatants and start violent actions against other groups of the same nature. Great armed conflicts are defined as violent conflicts regarding the government or the territory, in which both parties use armed forces, of which one belongs to the government (or faction of government) of a State, et having directly caused more than 1,000 deaths”. Same, p. 34, box 2.2.

the onset, humanitarian assistance should attempt to identify local structures to take over relief activities after the emergency phase.

This book focuses on international (or external) humanitarian assistance, but only as a second-best choice. The first response to an event can only be given by those already present on the spot, who do not possess the limitations of humanitarian aid such as described under point 1.2.2. Thus the first humanitarian assistance given is not that of specialized organizations, but that which depends on local response capacity, no matter how small or limited. In other words, as explained in chapter one, local mitigation and coping strategies must be enhanced as the single most effective measure, while external humanitarian assistance should remain exceptional.

Objectives of humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian assistance has a dual objective : on the one hand, it must effectively provide, without resorting to the use of force, essential goods and services necessary to ensure the survival of the affected population, no longer able to cover their own needs.

Ensuring physical and psychological integrity of said population is a part of essential services. On the other hand, it must seek and contribute to recreating relatively normal conditions characteristic of the traditional environment of the affected population.

The first objective of humanitarian assistance is hardly controversial : guarantying the delivery of any essential good or service necessary for the survival of those incapable of satisfying their own needs. Humanitarian protection forms part of essential services. Specific mention of psychological integrity is made in order to include and endorse psycho-social attention.

Psycho-social care should also start during humanitarian assistance

Why is psychological integrity included in the objectives of humanitarian assistance? Because this other relatively recent aspect of humanitarian assistance directly relates to psychological and social problems of victims, mainly women and children. Humanitarian assistance has long focused on the visible elements (medical care, food and relief distributions, etc.) with little attention given to other components, such as psycho-social care.

As human perversion reaches in conflicts incredibly high levels of horror and abuse, awareness has been raised in order to provide adequate assistance for the numerous cases of trauma which affect civilian population, essentially women and children, prime victims of human cruelty[76].

[76] See as an example the reports of UNICEF Burundi : 1) "Reproductive and mental health status of women and girls in conflict situation", January 1995, high trauma and prostitution rates (70% and 90% respectively), p.9, and 2) "The trauma phenomenon lived by children during the ongoing crisis in Burundi. Its importance and consequences especially among non-accompanied children", January 1995. According to the results of this study, 93% of children have witnessed acts of violence, 15% have witnessed the death of a family member and 58% have been attacked (point 3, c.).

The humanitarian community and more particularly certain NGOs and UN agencies (SCF, UNICEF), have recognized the size and importance of the problem and have included therapeutic assistance within humanitarian assistance (as well as other essential life-preserving activities). Although this form of assistance is less spectacular than traditional relief and medical activities, it is no less important. However it can only be carried out once immediate vital relief and medical activities have been completed. Why? Because humanitarian assistance's first objective is human survival, and trauma do not generally present an immediate threat to the individual's life. Diagnosis may require more time and more attention than other activities, and therapeutic treatment may often outlast the emergency phase *stricto sensu*.

However this kind of activity should be included and started within the framework of humanitarian assistance, even if as a secondary objective. Other activities of similar nature (such as orthopedic projects), which start during humanitarian assistance but may well last longer than the emergency phase, should nonetheless be systematically included, in order to use a more comprehensive approach to human vulnerability.

The second objective of humanitarian assistance may well apparently appear contradictory with a definition that seeks to limit humanitarian assistance to three months per crisis at most : to seek and contribute to recreating relatively normal conditions characteristic of the traditional environment of the affected population.
But this clearly does not mean that humanitarian assistance is sole responsible for recreating said conditions. It means that humanitarian assistance must also be conscious of the need to recreate these conditions, and must participate in and integrate this component in its activities, as a link between emergency and development. ***Humanitarian assistance must also be sustainable. But total duration of humanitarian assistance activities (life-saving and durable life-preservation) should strive not to exceed one year****. In fact, funding for humanitarian assistance is normally limited to a one year period, although operation contracts are nonetheless renewable. The second type of activity requires a close coordination with development activities. Ideally a joint coordination structure should be established in a post-emergency environment, in a joint and participatory manner with the local communities. The same as for emergency activities, a hand-over should be planned from the start for secondary activities at the end of the one-year period, so that humanitarian assistance may withdraw.*

Humanitarian aid is any and/or the sum of all activities undertaken which allows humanitarian assistance to take place.

Humanitarian aid is therefore a requisite for humanitarian assistance. Again, these definitions are proposed mainly in order to set operational boundaries for humanitarian aid and humanitarian assistance. These, or any other definitions, will be of little practical use unless there is a clear consensus among all humanitarian assistance organizations to accept, recognize and respect the limits of a "universal" definition. An effort should be made to come up with a common working definition acceptable to all.

1.5 Absence of a common definition : advantages and disadvantages

Perhaps more important than the need for a consensual definition is the reason beyond the lack of said definition. In other words, what are the advantages of using concepts willingly undefined, such as "humanitarian aid".

First and foremost, the absence of a clear definition opens a wide spectrum as to what can be considered humanitarian aid. As a result decisions affecting humanitarian aid are not limited to needs-based, targeted technical activities but may also reflect political opportunism.
Quoting again from the DAC, "The need to appear active in the face of humanitarian crises is a foreign policy concern that can, at times, operate independently of objective assessments of what is needed to support a humanitarian assistance operation. Providing humanitarian assistance and military support to it is, in many cases, an admission that governments are either unwilling of unable to provide real political solutions. Humanitarian assistance can become a facade behind which lies a political vacuum. "[77] So in fact the absence of a common definition allows humanitarian aid to be used as a tool of governments foreign policy, despite its professed blatantly non-political goals.

Second, the use of the word "humanitarian" in the term "humanitarian aid" seems to indicate that by contrast all other types of aid are not humanitarian. According to the Webster dictionary, the adjective humanitarian is defined primarily as "having concern for or helping to improve the welfare and happiness of mankind".[78] We have seen previously the moral contents which characterize humanitarian aid (solidarity, liberty, equality). Immediately one must thus question the objectives of development aid, if it is void of humanitarian concerns. Is development aid only a tool to foment economic growth, disconnected from people's aspirations and void of any concern as regards to the welfare and happiness of a country's citizens? Is it only a tool designed to improve the macro-economic aggregates for donor round tables? Or is development aid essentially a Keynesian instrument to ensure the highest return rate on overseas investments?

There can only be two possibilities : either development aid is also concerned about people's welfare and happiness, and it is thus philosophically a part of "humanitarian aid", if from a different angle, or its objectives are void of humanitarian concerns, and it becomes just another tool of government. In the first case, development aid becomes an essential component of humanitarian politics, whereas in the second it appears as a separate entity.

For humanitarian aid organizations, the absence of a consensus on the term of "humanitarian aid" is negative in that it allows donors to pursue funding according to political concerns and media coverage rather than following a needs based comprehensive approach to human vulnerability.

2. Conceptual unfolding of events in a best case scenario

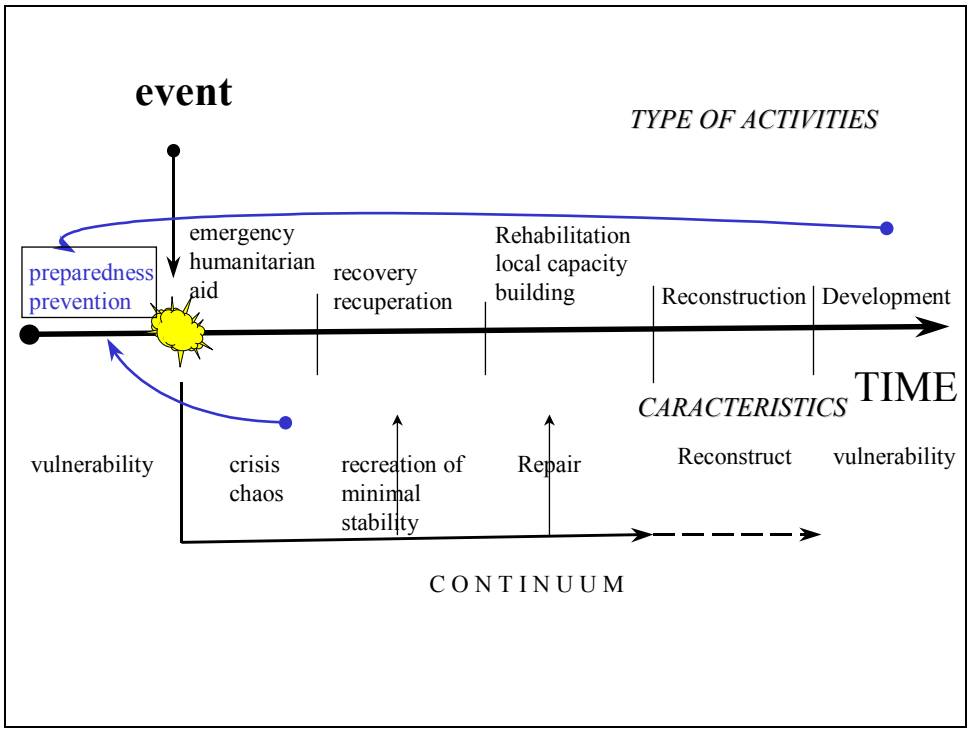
Links and differences between emergency and development are many and complex. In order to illustrate these it is first necessary to present the unfolding of a crisis. In the following box time flows from left to right.

The first phase, or pre-crisis phase, is that during which **prevention and preparation** measures should be undertaken, before a crisis occurs. This is when vulnerability studies should be undertaken and on their basis adequate preventive measures implemented (i.e. risk mapping), in order to reduce vulnerability and avoid losses of human lives and property. Preparedness must also be built-in at the pre-crisis stage.

[77] DAC, Report No 1., op. cit., p. 7
[78] Webster Dictionary, op. cit., p. 691

This is also where an important effort should be made in order to develop or strengthen as much as possible local response capacity. As mentioned in chapter one, only local resources are usually available during a primary emergency, which is where human losses may be highest. As a result prevention and preparation at local level is of paramount importance in order to save lives and should be the primary focus of D/P programs, while adequate preparation of external humanitarian assistance may also contribute to increased effectiveness during a crisis (i.e. contingency planning and stockpiling).

An event (natural or man-made) then triggers a crisis. The situation enters into an emergency phase, often marked by temporary chaos as local resources are overwhelmed.



During the **emergency** all attention is given at mitigating the effects of the crisis. The primary objectives of humanitarian assistance are protection and provision of essential goods and services necessary to ensure survival of the affected population. At the same time future development plans should be drawn with an emphasis on short-term quick impact projects.

Once the crisis has been brought under control (i.e. once mortality rates and death toll have dropped to a level comparable to the pre-crisis level -or that of the surrounding population if a return to pre-crisis level is not possible-) through the provision of effective humanitarian assistance **recovery** (Rcv) must begin. The second objective of humanitarian assistance must immediately be implemented, striving to recreate a minimum of stability in which relative normalcy can be obtained. A comprehensive and integrated approach must adequately target activities to be undertaken, in order to recreate a relatively stable and “normal” situation. In this phase a pro-active approach from the assisted population and local authorities is compulsory, in addition to adequate support from the major donors (both in terms of funding and of technical assistance).

Activities may include *inter alia* the recreation of local administrative posts and local structures, as well as an active support to civil society (development of churches, women's groups, associations, cooperatives, etc), income generating projects, QIPs (quick impact projects) to name only a few. Here humanitarian assistance must phase out of the spotlights and attention be centered on activities undertaken by the assisted population with the support of local authorities. **Humanitarian assistance must focus on local participation as a key to successful recovery**.

This is also where the media could well play an important advocacy role if coverage was provided (which it sadly never is. To show an expatriated person's dedication in providing humanitarian assistance to passive population in a ruined country thousands of miles away is apparently more spectacular than to show the capacity of the assisted population to contribute to their own recovery. Apparently some trace of the old colonial past still remains). In this phase methodologies based on participation must be implemented, not only as yielding best results but also in order to reduce or avoid the "aid dependency syndrome" which comes when beneficiaries have taken the habit of receiving a comprehensive aid package without having to give nothing in return ("passive assistance"). In certain cases this may be understandable at the beginning of an emergency phase (the actual physical and mental state of beneficiaries may often initially not allow for any kind of participation whatsoever), but in the recovery phase all *able* beneficiaries should be asked for a level of participation through their direct implication in at least one of the activities undertaken in recovery.

This is also the moment when humanitarian assistance and development have to meet. In recovery development staff should focus on implementing QIPs as a means to contribute to relative normalcy, preparing thus the phase out of humanitarian assistance and the phase in of development activities through this "hand-over" period. Joint coordination and planning between humanitarian assistance and development should be undertaken in this phase and development activities should focus on implementing small community based projects rather than large, costly and long-term macro-economic projects.

Rehabilitation and local capacity building (r/lcb) are the main activities which follow recovery. Once relative stability is reached, the next step is obtaining an environment as close as possible to the pre-crisis environment. This means that an attempt to neutralize the effects of the crisis must be made. So the level of destruction to physical property, infrastructures, loss of human knowledge (brain drain) and human lives must be minimized as much as possible. That is the essence of rehabilitation and local capacity building : neutralizing effects and repairing consequences of the crisis both in terms of material and human assets.

In this phase participation of local authorities is essential since a large part of the rehabilitation effort may bear on repair of public infrastructures (sewer and waste disposal systems, water and utilities, roads and communications, hospitals, schools, etc.). A special effort should also be undertaken in the education sector at all levels (both formal and informal) in order to make up for losses of human assets, including where necessary training and local technical assistance. Because activities in this phase should usually be undertaken in relatively normal conditions (limited uncertainty) it is not compulsory for results to be immediate or short-term, especially when looking at education and training. In other words, the scope of rehabilitation and local capacity building extend well beyond the short term, looking at sustainable development. As such, rehabilitation and local capacity building are not a traditional

part of humanitarian assistance, but form part of the post-emergency developmental link with humanitarian assistance.

In theory rehabilitation and local capacity building are activities which good development aid should automatically undertake once relative stability and recovery have been achieved. However in practice things are different. For one because in conflicts development agencies are often the first to leave and the last to come back. As such a gap exists between humanitarian assistance and development which has placed humanitarian assistance in an uneasy position, having to assume *de facto* an additional responsibility for which it is not equipped, and sometimes not prepared. Second, development has traditionally been very slow to act, with much bureaucracy, little flexibility and much difficulty in obtaining funds for projects. On the contrary the comparative advantage of humanitarian assistance is speed, flexibility, funding and effectiveness. The presence of humanitarian assistance in situations where development should take over but is not present to do so further explains why, in practice, humanitarian assistance has become involved in these activities. *However, rehabilitation and local capacity building are nothing but post-emergency activities which must be undertaken wherever balanced development policies are being implemented following an integrated approach to human development.*

Reconstruction (rct) covers activities which normally involve heavy physical works and enhancing productive sector capacity. In this phase major construction work is undertaken in relation to the level of physical destruction during the crisis. As such, reconstruction may target essential sectors such as housing and industry, to name but two. But reconstruction is not necessarily limited to constructing anew, or to re-constructing physical structures as they were before the crisis. As time passes needs, trends, technology and even authorities may change. Reconstruction is the final phase which brings back a country (or region, or city) on the path to development. Reconstruction finally fills any remaining gaps in physical structures of local economy and allows for production to return to its normal capacity. The main players of reconstruction are authorities, key sectoral ministries (urban planning, public works, housing, etc.) and public and private business, without forgetting financial institutions (donors, IMF, World Bank, UN agencies, etc.). Reconstruction is a part of macro-economic policies and planning and is the first post-emergency purely developmental activity in which humanitarian assistance has nothing to contribute. By the time a country reaches reconstruction, humanitarian assistance should have ceased if adequate development policies have been followed.

The next phase is **development**. Development requires either an extensive discussion, which would lead us well beyond the purpose of this book which focuses on humanitarian politics, or a simplified, rough and incomplete draft of what development is. Again there is a clear contradiction between concepts (what development should be) and reality (what kind of development is really being done).
A distinction must also be made between bilateral development, essentially a foreign policy tool of governments, and multilateral (U.N.) and NGO development work. While the first answers to political consideration, the second should be essentially needs-based.

The same as in humanitarian aid there is no consensus on what development is precisely. Out of the many definitions, a majority agrees to define development as a process of some sort. But there are also many types of development. Economic development, social development, etc.. Almost as many as there are forms of vulnerability. However the most important form of development and that which forms the basis for the other types of development is human development. For the purpose

of this book “development” will refer to “human development” according to UNDP’s 1990 Human Development Report definition stating that “Human development is a process which generates greater opportunities for people”. Thus as a process, development is a continuous system. But as an activity label for assistance, it covers all activities which contribute to increased human opportunities, starting with vulnerability reduction.

It has been said before that ideally development projects should start in the recovery phase, with special emphasis on rapid impact (QIPs). As time goes by, so should development increase its role in the rehabilitation and local capacity building phase, reaching its cruising speed in the reconstruction phase and into traditional development phase. However development has been often criticized for not having been able to follow models which have focused on vulnerability, social stability and equality of opportunities - or improved equity in wealth distribution and pro-poor growth-, but has rather concentrated on the economic sphere (economic growth). This is but a reflection of the universally applied economic liberalization policies which the IMF and the World Bank impose on recipient countries as allegedly the only path to sustainable development. The social and political consequences of SAP (structural adjustment program) and SAF (structural adjustment facilities) are only too famous, while the economic principles guiding these international programs are always the same : reducing public deficit (i.e. cut social spending), privatization, currency stabilization, foment export-led economic growth in the name of global competition. With this, economic prosperity will be obtained, and (hopefully) the rest will follow. But this is not always the case. Economic growth is not a synonym of development, as UNDP’s Human Development Report recalls year after year. On the contrary, if wealth redistribution policies are not put in place, economic growth may further destabilize a country by fomenting inequalities and increasing the gap between rich and poor. In fact, there is increasing evidence that these programs contribute to increased illicit and illegal activities in the informal sector as traditional sources of income have to be abandoned, generating obvious negative effects for the country.[79] Again political decisions seem to dictate orientations of development work.

Development aid is in crisis. After more than forty years of existence, development aid has little results to show. One reason might be the lack of flexibility of development programs to adapt to reality and a rapidly changing environment. Part of the blame may rest on academics, who focus on long-term theoretical development frameworks and instruments which seduce intellectually but have little practical applicability. From a human perspective it is preferable to have an imperfect theoretical framework but practical policies which reduce inequalities and promote human development rather than to have a perfect theoretical framework which is only used as a cover to discriminatory measures in favor of large enterprises and special interest groups. In any case planning long-term goals without the flexibility to integrate crisis scenarios demonstrates a certain ingenuity and a lack of realism when looking at human history. In the last ten years geopolitical changes (German reunification and the collapse of the Soviet Union and ensuing multitude of new independent states) have radically changed the trends and needs for development funding. Recent research seems to indicate that unstable systems are more common than stable systems, thus that “orderly disorders” may probably be the

[79] see the article by M. Chossudovsky “Comment les mafias gangrènent l’économie mondiale” in Le Monde Diplomatique, 24 December 1996, p.24-25. The examples of increased drug production in Bolivia and Peru as a result of economic stabilisation and structural adjustment policies are of particular interest.

norm when looking at long periods.[80] The need to incorporate crisis management scenarios and contingency plans within development programs, or introduce some sort of flexible development schemes, has yet to become a reality.

Another form of criticism against development has to do with unsustainable projects which have been implemented through bilateral development aid. Those so-called "white elephants", expensive and magnificent constructions which only aim to please the rulers but bring no benefit whatsoever to the people, were unfortunately only too common some years ago, particularly in African countries, not to mention the amounts of money marked as "development funds" which ended into numbered Swiss bank accounts. This underlines the political dimension of bilateral development. More than anything else, development is a tool of governments' foreign policy. It is more than questionable whether it should remain so. By adopting the view that development and humanitarian aid are different sides of the same coin, development aid automatically must become a part of "humanitarian politics". As such it should be elaborated with the participation of and supervised by civil society.

New development perspectives (more humane, targeting vulnerability and social equity) and recommendations contained in UNDP's 1997 Human Development Report brings some new insight on concrete actions that will be able to redirect development on a path to a more human, equitable and balanced form of aid. Through civil society's mobilization campaigns worldwide we must strive for international financial institutions and donors to follow and apply these sensible recommendations to foment a better and more balanced human development program for the twenty first century. A slow process in which already some progress has been made. For example following lessons from hurricane Mitch in Central America in November 1998 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has developed specific strategies to include environmental and social risk analysis in any reconstruction projects financed by the bank, in order to reduce the amount of damage and destruction caused, and given that poorer people are comparatively more vulnerable due to their lack of economic resources.[81]. It is this kind of concrete steps that donors and international institutions must take to improve the reduction of human vulnerability, rather than focusing merely on large infrastructure and macroeconomics programs. But institutions do not make policies : people do. So more than anything it is important to identify "humanitarians" within the donor and international financial institutions who are willing to invest more into vulnerability reduction and human development, even if it entails a higher economic cost.

From what we have just seen it is clear that in practice unfolding of events does not follow a smooth, linear progression. Often a country may simultaneously combine more than one phase, and one may find relief activities alongside recovery and even rehabilitation and capacity building (i.e. in Bosnia). The difficulty in these situations lays in complementing humanitarian assistance with sound and balanced development activities, while adequate coordination between the two is most difficult to reach. In recent years humanitarian assistance has grown considerably, both in terms of number of NGOs and of magnitude of interventions (Great Lakes, Somalia, Ex-Yugoslavia, etc.). Although military operations have seriously damaged the credibility of humanitarian assistance, it has traditionally enjoyed a wide support both in terms of acceptance and effectiveness. Comparatively development has enjoyed little media coverage, being far less spectacular, and accomplishments have been

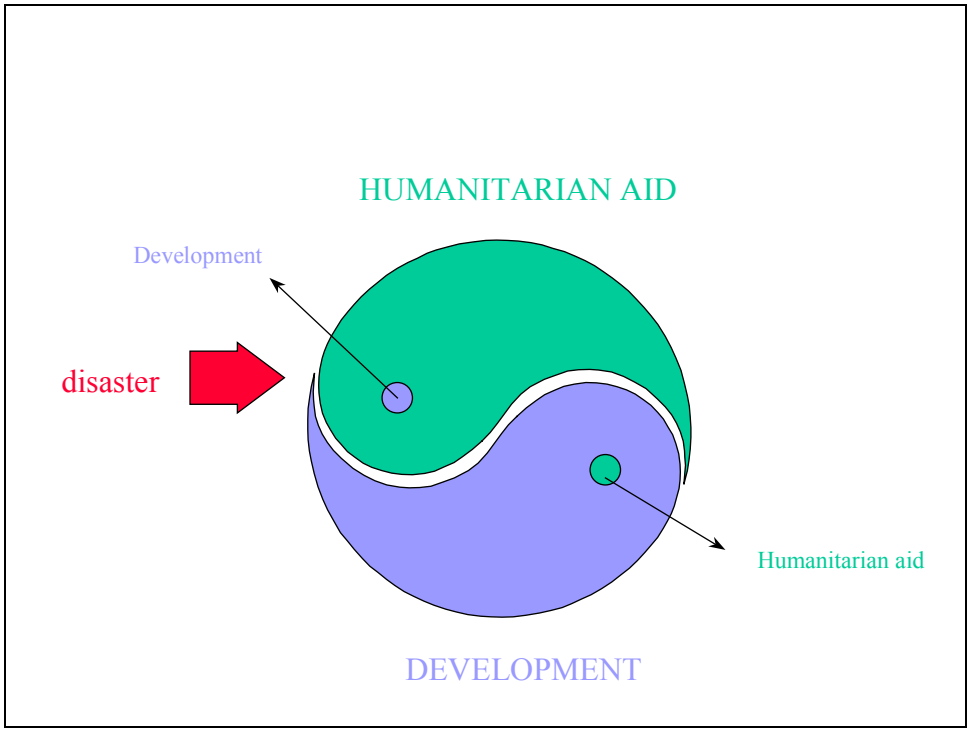
[80] Ilia Priogine, "La fin des certitudes", Editions Odile Jacob, Paris, 1996

[81] working paper "Reducing vulnerability to natural hazards : environmental management", Consultative group meeting for the reconstruction and transformation of Central America, Regional Operational Department 2, IDB, May 1999

more often criticized than praised. In reality, there is a strong jealousy among development staff in regards to humanitarian assistance, who feel that their equally valuable if less spectacular work is being underestimated. This may be true, especially when one observes the relative ease with which humanitarian assistance is able to secure funding for operations (especially with media coverage), finding adequate human and material resources at little cost (i.e. use of volunteer staff), the little time required to launch a humanitarian aid operation and its rapid impact. Compared to development activities, this is heaven.
But future evolution leans towards a more flexible, faster form of development aid. In fact progressively, because of its comparative advantages, humanitarian aid is becoming engaged in and assuming activities which were traditionally reserved for development aid.

Ideally, humanitarian assistance and development are two sides of the same coin, two different forms of aid which should work in an integrated, complementary strategy involving joint planning and close coordination of activities on technical and humanitarian grounds rather than responding to political considerations. For this to be true, development aid should be transformed to gain a certain degree of flexibility and independence which would allow it to become a true partner and an effective complement to humanitarian assistance. With effectiveness as the primary objective, not financial accountability (anyone having worked with the UNDP knows the quantity of red tape and paper work necessary in project management, which focuses more on accountability than efficacy).

Conceptually, one could represent the relation between humanitarian aid and development using the universally known Chinese symbol of Yin and Yang.



This symbol can be used to show the ideal relation between humanitarian aid and development, or how things should be. After a disaster humanitarian aid must intervene first and foremost to limit casualties and alleviate human suffering, but at the same time development activities should already be identified and planned in

coordination with humanitarian aid activities. Bridges between humanitarian aid and development should be established from the onset. Even in the early stages of a crisis identification of future development actions should be undertaken once conditions allow its implementation. As time passes humanitarian aid gradually disengages in favor of development aid, but maintaining nonetheless contingency plans in case development activities fail to address the root causes of vulnerability and generate a new exposure to risk. In this ideal relation humanitarian aid and development should work together, side by side, sharing information and coordinating activities. All for the good of the affected population. All for more efficient and effective assistance.

Interestingly another use of this same symbol has been made to illustrate both the concept of global vulnerability and global sustainability and that of opportunity and threat in an enlightening book on disasters.[82] This shows that in any situation more than one single element must be considered (avoid over simplification), and that aspects apparently contradictory do coexist (complex nature of a situation).

There are various concepts and theories regarding the different post-crisis phases. In some humanitarian assistance should be limited to the emergency phase, while in others it should continue into the recovery phase, into rehabilitation and local capacity building and even sometimes into a reconstruction phase, adapting its activities to the specific needs of each phase. The continuum concept is used to cover activities which are traditionally out of the sphere of emergency relief activities but not yet well within development. Other concepts include the notion of "contiguum", a polished variable of continuum which is based on situations which include more than one phase (cluster concept). Not surprisingly, similarly different concepts of when development activities should start abound, ranging from even within the emergency phase up to when reconstruction programs start. The previous presentation of activities to be undertaken in each phase is a purely personal appreciation and does not seek to reflect any particular school of thought.

Whatever the concept, it is in the interest of beneficiaries to streamline and link humanitarian assistance and development activities. Again, from the perspective of an aid recipient, it matters little whether the assistance given is called "emergency", "humanitarian" or "development". What really matters is that it be adapted and effective. In order to be effective complementary activities should closely be coordinated. Ideally development staff should have some experience of humanitarian assistance, having thus gained a background of rapid intervention and fast project implementation targeting the most vulnerable, with greater insight into the human dimension, while humanitarian assistance staff should also possess experience in development, to learn how to work with development constraints, with local authorities and local population and with a longer-term vision of sustainable assistance. Each would then be better prepared to understand and work together with the other. Each would then be more professional. Each would then be more effective.

To summarize, crisis situations can be divided into three distinct phases, though there are still discrepancies as to lengths of time required and components to be included in each phase (especially in the post-emergency phase) :

a) the pre-crisis phase, in which prevention and preparedness must be undertaken,
b) an emergency phase, when the crisis erupts, in which mitigation measures must be implemented,

[82] Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, "Auge, Caída y Levantada de Felipe Pinillo, Mecánico y soldador o Yo voy a correr el riesgo", op. cit., p. 120.

c) a post-emergency development phase, in which all measures for a return to normalcy must be taken.

But how do the three phases interact and what are their links? That is the next point which needs to be analyzed.

2.1. The three phases and their links

Humanitarian assistance is concerned by three phases, although its main activities have traditionally been undertaken during the emergency phase. The same than in medicine, one must follow prevention, cure and convalescence in the patient's own interest, humanitarian assistance must be able to find its adequate place within each of these phases if it wants to be effective and coherent in assisting its target beneficiaries. In particular, division of labor between humanitarian and development assistance in the third phase remains a debated and difficult issue. To ensure consistency, the ideal situation would be that both humanitarian aid (emergency experts) and development aid be brought to work together in specific situations. While this is already the case for a number of NGOs involved in both types of activities, both the international United Nations system and donors are far from having reached a consensus on this question. Rather there is a strong resistance to mix emergency with development aid, considering the latter to be a political prerogative of governments much less subject to external influence than emergency operations which received media coverage and mobilize public opinion.

The first box presents the three phases in the case of natural disasters.

A. THREE PHASES IN NATURAL DISASTERS

TIME	**PRE-CRISIS BEFORE**	**CRISIS DURING**	**POST-CRISIS AFTER**
PHASE	I	II	III
DURATION	varying according to projects which may be short or long-term (i.e. enhancing local mitigation capacity)	three months, emergency *stricto sensu*	varying according to each sub-phase : a) Recovery, (rec) b) Rehabilitation, (r/lcb) c) Reconstruction, (rct) d) Development, (dev)
TYPE	Prevention	Cure	Convalescence
LABEL	Disaster prevention & preparedness(D/P)	Humanitarian assistance (emergency assistance or relief assistance)	post-emergency development projects
CHANNELS	Preventive projects (i.e. early warning, protective cons-tructions) Prepared-ness (i.e first aid)	Provision of vital goods and services : medical, food search and rescue.	micro-projects, income generating, all RRRD projects according to need in each sub-phase.
REQUIRED	vulnerability mapping risk and crisis management training & education	rapid intervention effectiveness of assistance presence on the spot	forward planning timely implementation adequacy to vulnerability needs
OBJECTIVE	avoid human and material losses vulnerability reduction protection	save lives, alleviate human suffering, control the crisis	return to normalcy, or improvement
ECONOMIC FOCUS	**Cost-benefit and/or Cost-effectiveness**	**no economic focus (funding secondary constraint)**	**Cost-benefit, rarely Cost-effectiveness**
DONORS (examples)	EEC/ECHO USAID/OFDA bi/multilateral aid Govt.	EEC/ECHO USAID/DART bi/multilateral aid Govt.	EEC/FED/DGs USAID bi/multilateral aid, Govt. UN, IMF, WB, IDB, etc.
TARGET	**at risk community**	**vulnerable individual**	**community**
PLAYERS	UN agencies (IDNDR, OCHA), NGOs, specialized organizations (i.e. IFRC) regional organizations (i.e. Cepredenac, OAS)		

PHASE I

In case of natural disasters, disaster prevention and preparedness (D/P) cover a specific aspect of humanitarian aid : projects which aim either at reducing vulnerability of at-risk communities or at enhancing local mitigation capacity.

These projects can take numerous forms according to the nature of the disaster, the type of risk, technology, environmental and funding considerations, *but characteristics and criteria for prevention and preparedness have commonly been known and clearly defined.* This is of particular interest when comparing with the tools used in conflict prevention.

The *duration* of D/P projects varies. Some projects may focus on specific short-term components (such as preparation in early warning, risk mapping, evacuation, first aid, shelter management and construction, etc.) and exert a positive impact on local capacities (including pilot projects with community participation). Other activities may extend over a longer period, such as projects which use the education sector as a vector for capacity building (slow process but which may prove efficient in the long term). Others simply may simply require a long time to be completed (such as construction of dikes against flooding. The actual physical construction may not take so long, but unfortunately the time needed for the project to be fully completed and operative, considering funding and red tape constraints may at times extend into the long term).

While projects' duration are different, each according to its specific nature, D/P itself should be a constant process, which must be kept up to date as research yields new information allowing for ever more efficient and effective forms of prevention and preparedness, through the use of adequate technologies.

Ideally D/P requires an integrated and systematic approach to vulnerability. The first step in D/P is identifying and mapping vulnerability and risks. This means that within a given country, vulnerability has been identified both in geographic and demographic terms (e.g. specific geographical identification of disaster-prone areas and number of at-risk population in each area). Risk evaluation must be undertaken to foresee the type of consequences and impact of disasters both in terms of human and material losses (including environmental damages). This information allows in turn D/P projects to adequately target specific disaster risks in a given area.

The *type* of activities in D/P are preventive. The objective of prevention is protection and reduction of human and material losses. As such prevention includes preparedness activities, which follow a similar objective but focus on enhancing mitigation capacity (i.e. during the crisis, phase II). Prevention and preparedness are two aspects of the same problem. Prevention aims at reducing effects of disasters before they happen. Effectiveness of prevention can be seen immediately when disaster strikes according to the level of damage caused. On the contrary preparedness activities cannot be evaluated until past the event, since preparedness is meant to improve response capacity. However both types of activities are necessary and complementary.

The *label* used to tackle disaster reduction is usually disaster prevention and preparedness, or "D/P". Often D/P projects are prepared by earth scientist such as geologists, seismologists, architects, engineers, environmentalists who have been involved in vulnerability mapping and are most risk conscious.

Ideally D/P projects should be able to cover all at-risk areas within a country, and preparedness should include all sectors, following an integrated approach in its aim to enhance mitigation capacity during the crisis phase. This means that efforts to create operational "D/P" cells in key sectoral ministries in disaster-prone countries in order to link, coordinate and complement activities undertaken during the crisis phase should be supported. Similarly support to D/P research should be ensured.

The essential *target* of D/P are at-risk communities. These are population who will directly be affected by a disaster.

Another significant point is the *economic focus* of D/P projects, which tend to follow a cost-benefit approach, or at times a cost-effective approach (upgrading hospital and health centers to withstand earthquakes, etc).

Because of the variety of D/P projects, funds are available from both humanitarian assistance (i.e. for short-term preparedness or prevention projects, low technology micro or pilot projects) and development (longer-term more costly D/P projects requiring more sophisticated technology such as GIS -geographic information system- or satellite technology).

PHASE II

This is the phase where humanitarian assistance takes full meaning. In an emergency crisis stage, *time* is of utmost importance in order to save lives. Thus the quicker (and better prepared) the intervention the better. But by definition emergency is an exceptional, short term situation. **As such the duration of humanitarian assistance to meet the needs and control the situation should not exceed three months at most**. In natural disasters, such a period has always been more than enough to allow humanitarian assistance to meet its objectives.

The *type* of activity is curative. The *label* used during this phase is humanitarian assistance (alternatively the term of *emergency* assistance has also been used, or emergency relief. However emergency assistance is a more restrictive concept, which should focus solely on life saving activities, whereas humanitarian assistance itself covers other activities such as life-preserving activities). The channels which may be used by humanitarian assistance have already been presented earlier. In the case of natural disasters, provision of essential services may include *inter alia* search and rescue teams, medical activities, shelter construction, water and food availability, clothing and blankets distribution, sanitation activities (if necessary), and psycho-social care.

The *means* to reach the objectives are based on the adequacy of the intervention : celerity, presence, effectiveness through efficiency and preparedness (i.e. adequate training and technical capabilities of human resources).

The *objectives* of humanitarian assistance are always the same. On the one hand and as a first priority, saving and preserving as many lives (or impeding as many deaths) as possible through the provision of adequate goods and services to the affected population. On the other hand and as secondary priority, seeking and contribute to recreate relative normalcy and undertake sustainable life-preserving activities.

Humanitarian assistance at the heart of an emergency does not have an *economic focus.* Rather it seeks the highest possible level of effectiveness regardless of the

costs incurred. Its *target* is all affected population *down to the last individual*. There is an obvious difference with phases I and III which follow an economic focus and where the community is the target.

PHASE III

This post-crisis (or post-emergency as it is sometimes called) phase marks a shift in humanitarian assistance. It includes all sub-phases which precede traditional development activities, i.e. recovery, rehabilitation/local capacity building and reconstruction. Because the length of each sub-phase may vary according to the specifics of each situation, it is not possible to clearly determine a *duration* for each sub-phase. In addition, a particular situation may correspond to more than one sub-phase, and recovery may coexist with rehabilitation and reconstruction. Once the stage of traditional development is reached, there is no longer a need for a time-frame. Development is a constant and dynamic process, not limited in time. It could be suggested that the first sub-phase following emergency, recovery, should be limited to a maximum of six months. If relative stability has not been reached by that time it would be difficult to implement other development projects which require local support and a certain degree of stability.

As of yet there is no generic *label* for post-emergency development projects given the variety of existing projects. The first letter of each sub-phase will thus be retained to indicate the post-emergency period (i.e. RRRD).

The activities in this phase are clearly similar to those which must be undertaken by a *convalescent* patient who, after having undergone major surgery, aims at rapid return to full health. The situation is still relatively fragile, but becomes less so as time passes and consolidation takes effect.
In the recovery phase, activities must have a quick impact. As stability increases, so may RRRD activities aim at longer term objectives and delayed impacts.

Channels for RRRD activities are many, in accordance with the specific nature of each sub-phase. These range from micro-projects (associations, income generating projects) to large-scale construction.

The *objective* of post-emergency development projects is to restore normalcy, thus creating conditions for resuming sustainable development. In case of projects which are specifically development oriented, the objective may even be to improve conditions to a level above that of the pre-crisis phase.

What is required for projects to be effective in this phase is that they be designed with forward planning, be implemented on time and do not overlook social and economic human vulnerability needs. In other words, projects should not only emphasize a macro-economic perspective but also look at supporting those most in need at community level (i.e. attaching more importance to the social impact of economic decisions), as a measure to increased stability and improved equitable human development. This is part of a holistic approach and this is where humanitarian assistance could complement development assistance. It should be one of the main concerns of post-emergency projects, within an integrated approach.

The *economic focus*, as in phase I, normally uses a cost-benefit approach. As such, the *target* of RRRD activities are equally communities.

Two important points must be underlined :

1) The target (or category of beneficiaries). In phase I and III (prevention and convalescence), projects focus on **communities**, whereas in the emergency phase, humanitarian assistance targets the most vulnerable **individuals**.

2) The economic focus, which is based on **cost-benefit (or cost-effectiveness)** [83] in phases I and III, whereas the emergency phase is not primarily concerned about costs but about **effectiveness** of operations. Economic concerns in emergencies are only a secondary constraint.

These two elements explain why *there can be a degree of exclusion in phases I and III* : a project which favors a majority of the target population may be acceptable, even if not every single individual will benefit from it. (For example, a preventive project to reduce the number of deaths and injuries should be accepted, even though not all casualties may be avoided. But to reduce fatality in earthquakes by twenty percent is no doubt worthwhile, even if fatalities will subsist).

On the contrary in humanitarian assistance, there is a moral obligation to assist from first to last every single individual. A food distribution to a majority of the community does not constitute an adequate humanitarian assistance activity until the last individual has received his share, and medical assistance to a majority of injured people does not allow the medical staff to suspend its assistance until after the last individual has been treated. Humanitarian assistance must therefore always pursue its activities until all people have been assisted.
So duties and responsibilities of humanitarian emergency assistance are greater than activities of the other two phases since the exclusion of any person in need is unacceptable and as such should not be accepted.

Another essential difference between phases is that emergencies (phase II) do not have to follow an economic approach. Since the primary objective is life-saving, attention is focused on effectiveness of operations regardless of cost considerations. In other words, for activities in emergencies cost considerations are only a secondary constraint, which by no means must limit the scope of operations.
Fund raising is carried out according to needs estimate, not given a fix financial package. The needs estimate determines not only the extent of assistance required but also the manner in which assistance will be provided. Donors have traditionally generously responded to initial emergency costs. Unfortunately the relatively “easy” funding humanitarian assistance is able to obtain in emergencies does not extend to activities of phase I or phase III.
(Incidentally that is why funding requests increasingly tend to tie emergency with development, so that the easy funding received under phase II may extend to activities under phase III. And that is quite logical and legitimate, especially in view of avoiding any gaps. Unfortunately this has not yet spread to prevention activities).

The duration of search and rescue team operations after a disaster are not dictated by cost concerns, but by the probability and feasibility of finding survivors after a disaster. In the same way, remote and isolated areas sometimes are only accessible through air travel (helicopters or airplanes), which makes the cost of assistance to these beneficiaries skyrocket. Yet when a person is rescued alive from under debris

[83] Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) follows a mercantile logic and uses money as sole measure. Its essential criterion is maximum net social profitability. Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) allows the introduction of non-monetary considerations, and is thus able to determine priorities which are not of an economic nature. Cf. Yves Crozet, “Economic Analysis of the State”, Armand Colin, Paris, 1991, p. 100 to 106.

days after an earthquake, or cases in which airlifts or helicopter assistance is required as the only means of access, no donor has ever come to question the feasibility of these actions, even if they are expensive. If one was to compare the cost per person assisted between the survivors found by search and rescue teams (or the beneficiaries of airlift operations) to the overall beneficiary caseload, these activities would not prove cost-effective. But they are necessary given the absence of any alternative.

Because without the (costly) assistance received, victims might have died. And no one can argue that assistance should not be provided on the grounds of high costs. It is thus implicitly widely accepted that in emergencies all available means to save lives should be used. The objective is effectiveness. Not necessarily cost-effectiveness.

Differences between natural disasters and conflicts

B.THREE PHASES IN CONFLICT SITUATION

TIME	**PRE-CRISIS BEFORE**	**CRISIS DURING**	**POST-CRISIS AFTER**
PHASE	I	II	III
DURATION	varying according to type of activity	three months, emergency *stricto sensu*	according to sub-phase: Recovery - rcv Rehabilitation - r/lcb Reconstruction - rct Development - dev
TYPE	Prevention	Cure	Convalescence
LABEL	Conflict prevention 1. Preventive diplomacy 2. IHL (International Humanitarian Law), HR (Human Rights) 3. Humanism and ethics (including religion)	Humanitarian assistance, emergency assistance emergency relief	post-emergency development projects (RRRD projects)
CHANNEL	1. Political and economic actions (sanctions, embargo, etc.) public opinion (media) 2. International legislation and advocacy, dissemination 3. Civil society	Provision of essential goods and services : medical, food protection, psycho-social.	micro-projects, QIPs, income generating, all RRRD projects according to each sub-phase.
REQUIRED	1. Credibility & support 2. Internat. campaign & conference, promotion 3. grass root support active participation	rapid intervention effectiveness of assistance presence on the spot	forward planning timely implementation adequacy to vulnerability needs
OBJECTIVE	1,2,3 avoid conflict, avoid division of society, promote stability	save lives, alleviate human suffering, control the crisis	return to normalcy, or improvement
ECONOMIC FOCUS	**1,2,3.None**	**no specific focus effectiveness main objective**	**cost-benefit, rarely cost-effectiveness**
DONORS	1. Governments, lobbies, private interest groups 2.EEC, USAID, etc. 3.depends on structure	EEC/ECHO USAID/DART bi/multilateral aid governments	EEC/FED/DGs USAID bi/multilateral aid Govts, ODA, UN, IMF WB, etc.
TARGET	**1,2,3 community**	**vulnerable individuals**	**community**
PLAYERS	1. Govt. diplomats & UN Representatives 2. Specialized UN agencies, CHR), NGOs, Red Cross 3. All civil society groups	UN, NGOs, Red Cross	UN, NGOs. Red Cross (women's association, churches, etc.)

One of the main differences between natural disasters and conflicts disasters has to do with the first phase which precedes the crisis.

PHASE I

In conflict situations, there is no equivalent standard to that of "D/P" in case of natural disasters. This has to do with the fact that in conflict situations, much depends directly on the human component (e.g. breakdown of social stability), whereas such a component is not a prominent factor in case of natural disasters (e.g. social stability does not decrease natural hazard vulnerability). As such, conflict prevention is multidimensional, taking many different forms which can be divided in three broad categories.

Generic label used for all prevention activities is normally "conflict prevention", which regroups several different categories.
The first category, commonly referred to as "preventive diplomacy", mainly represents activities of high ranking government officials (ambassadors, heads of cooperation agencies, etc.), high ranking United Nations officials (UNDP Resident Representative, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General, UN Special Envoy, etc.) and representatives of major donors (i.e. UE delegate). The second category covers international legislation, namely International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights (HR). The activities for promotion and respect of IHL and HR are essentially undertaken by NGOs, specialized agencies (UN Center for Human Rights, ICRC) through seminars, conferences, publications and other dissemination means. Strong advocacy is necessary for this category. The third category could be labeled as Humanism and Ethics. It includes all activities undertaken by civil society (including women's associations, churches, youth groups, etc.) which aim at promoting social stability and work actively towards peace education (i.e. through multiracial or multiethnic solidarity projects). Actors of this third category are based at ground level and enjoy grass root support (i.e. community based). Civil society includes all groups regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity or cultural background. While form, activity and ideal may vary greatly from one group to the next, yet all ultimately contribute in some aspect to the promotion of a humanistic objective of social cohesion and tolerance.

Preventive diplomacy has been defined as "a joint and continuous effort to prevent conflict. This coordinated effort rests on interested governments, United Nations, NGOs, regional organizations, researchers and the media. …Finally preventive diplomacy is also patience in order patience in regards to objectives to be reached".[84] As such it appears to have a wide range of instruments which it can use to pressure a given state (or group) to avoid an open conflict. Maybe the first instrument which should be used is a comprehensive development aid package targeting specifically social vulnerability in order to attempt to maintain social stability. When this is not successful or there is already a clear rupture by a group opposing the government in place (or in dictatorial countries which will not readily recognize the fragmentation of society), preventive diplomacy may have to resort to stronger measures. Preventive diplomacy may resort to media coverage to mobilize public opinion and influence a given group or state back on the path to reconciliation and peace through public declarations. However threats may also cause a negative impact and prove counter-productive.

[84] A. O. Abdallah, op. cit., p. 193-194.

Threats relate to various areas : political, military and economic. In general a combination of these factors are necessary to obtain some results (i.e. against the Serbs in Bosnia). However each factor may not constitute a decisive deterrent by itself to bring a state (or opposing factions) back on the path to peace. On the contrary, inadequate use of pressure means may at times exacerbate tensions and precipitate a conflict. Military interventions under the peace making or peace keeping heading have failed to obtain satisfactory results. Its limits have been discussed in the first chapter. Political pressures may be difficult to identify for two reasons : one because the stakes, form and means used may not always be known, two because pressure on a given country (or factions) may well be offset by opposing pressures from other regional powers. In this case preventive diplomacy has little weight unless it carries a broad international consensus, which it rarely does. For example, Belgium and France did not support the same "side" than the USA and England in the crisis of the Great Lakes (Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo - Ex-Zaire, etc.), and bilateral actions may have undermined preventive diplomacy efforts of the United Nations in the area. Thus specific political strategy of major powers may negatively influence inter-governmental preventive diplomacy. Fortunately in preventive diplomacy results, however slow, are quite visible and evidence any progress made. Yet preventive diplomacy is subject to the same limitations as protection: it is impossible to identify an unequivocal causal relation between preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. In other words, it is not possible to identify effectiveness indicators to evaluate preventive diplomacy activities since conflict prevention is the result of a complex series of factors, and not the result of a single activity.

Economic pressures may be easier to identify. But "to talk of sanctions is an indication that all other means have been used up. In particular, it means that option for a political settlement has momentarily failed".[85]
Traditionally economic sanctions have been used in many cases, but results are highly questionable. In fact it could well be argued that results are counterproductive on various accounts : for one, because those who suffer most from economic sanctions are already the most vulnerable whereas the leaders hardly feel the effects (i.e. Iraq, Cuba). Two, because imposing further external hardship on a given population may well feed lasting resentment against the perpetrators. Three, because such actions are likely to contribute further to internal destabilization and sapping of civil society, creating irreversible negative effects as new durable players of illegal and criminal activities emerge in the informal sector, who survive long after the conflict has been solved[86]. The "economic weapon" (i.e. embargo, blockade, freezing of assets, etc.) has often been used. But its effectiveness has just as often been questioned. As some economists mention :"Actually given the tight interdependence existing between national economies and the profound inequality in resource allocation, the economic weapon finds in principle the means of an effective expression, but which is ambiguous in its realization"[87]. The same authors further state :"Given the sum of modern experiences, it is not clear that the first victims (of an embargo) are those targeted….In fact, the embargo will be all the more effective that the victim is already destabilized and weakened. Otherwise negative effects are so important that it is dangerous to use this weapon"[88]. Other case studies have

[85] Ibid., p. 148.
[86] See in particular the chapter "Embargo et criminalisation de l'économie" by P. Kopp in "Economie des Guerres Civiles", under direction of F. Jean and J.-C. Rufin, collection Pluriel, Hachette, Paris, 1996.
[87] J. Fontanel and L. Bensahel, article "Economic War", in "Defense Economics", Arès, Volume XIII/4, J. Fontanel Editeur, Grenoble, 1992, p. 9/10.
[88] Ibid., p. 23

yielded highly valuable information on dangers and possible negative impacts of embargoes in specific situations[89].

So preventive diplomacy must be aware of its many limits, despite a seemingly broad range of instruments at its disposal. However in order to maximize its effectiveness, preventive diplomacy should gather as wide an international support as possible, in order to enhance its credibility and avoid interference from diverging political strategies from major donor countries. If there can be an international consensus on the need for preventive diplomacy, an international agreement on its mandate and means, and a wide respect from the world's governments (including a limit or a ban on arms trade and military supplies), then preventive diplomacy might be able to obtain the necessary resources allowing it to meet the challenge. Despite all its constraints, preventive diplomacy has at times proved effective in order to avoid open conflicts. As an example, in 1994 in Burundi, SRSG A. O. Abdallah managed to bring 15 parties to sign the "Government Convention" in order to avoid total chaos as a result of the assassination of the first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, in October of 1993. Those who were present in the country then know this was no small feat. Even if other factors also contributed to this success, preventive diplomacy in this case reached its aim.

The objectives of preventive diplomacy are essentially to avoid conflict, therefore a division of society, and to promote stability allowing for balanced development. Its target covers all population, or communities, in a given country or region. But because preventive diplomacy is essentially a political activity, it does not follow any specific economic focus nor rationale. Thus it is (wrongly) considered that preventive diplomacy, as other political activities, has not been integrated into any economic approach. The current institutional crisis of the United Nations looking for leadership in the new global world has been further deepened by the March 1999 NATO attack on Kosovo (perpetrated without even requesting or awaiting the green light from the UN Security Council) which seems to indicate that the United Nations are being increasingly marginalized and by-passed in crises situations. Maybe the failure of UN troops in recent conflicts (Unamir in Ruanda, Unprofor in Ex-Yugoslavia) or their inadequate mandate (chapter V and chapter VII clauses) have something to do with it. In any case it unfortunately appears that preventive diplomacy is being increasingly forgotten in conflict prevention strategies along with the role of world arbitrator the United Nations should play.

IHL and HR are necessary and useful complements to preventive diplomacy. While preventive diplomacy is essentially a high level activity at decision makers' level, IHL and HR are undertaken at all levels, ranging from top politicians and military officials down to civilian population and soldiers. Pro-active dissemination and advocacy from the various players are of paramount importance if a universal recognition and respect of IHL and HR is to be achieved some day. However because there is no international law enforcing agency, common violations of IHL and HR remain unpunished, or consequences on the offending party may depend largely on the arbitrary reactions of other states.

Like preventive diplomacy, IHL and HR are part of a process which may not necessarily yield short-term effective results in every situation. IHL and HR dissemination are carried out by major specialized agencies (such as the ICRC, which even prepares seminars for selected military officials from conflict-prone countries in San Remo) UN agencies (i.e. UNCHR, UNICEF, UNESCO) or NGOs, international fora and conferences are organized, but these activities are not subject

[89] "Economie des Guerres Civiles", op. cit.

to any specific economic focus, since for most players, these are but a part of their overall activities.

Civil society also contributes to conflict prevention through humanism and ethics. In this local NGOs should actively be supported, as well as any structure fomenting social stability and cohesion (be it an association, a group, a church or a movement - Red Cross or Scouts). To be effective active participation and grass root support must be ensured. Community participation is essential. However conflicts are often caused by a handful of ambitious individuals while a vast majority of population earnestly long for peace. It is thus important that civil society finds an adequate channel for its message and the promotion of peace education. Access to the media must be ensured (television, radio, press and books) as well as good dissemination channels which may contribute to defusing existing tensions (especially in those countries where media are being used by extremist groups, such as in Burundi).

Activities undertaken are equally not subject to any specific economic focus. All three means of conflict prevention are thus part of the political sphere, whereas D/P in natural conflicts does follow a given economic focus, and can therefore be integrated in an economic perspective.

Perhaps to develop economic analysis approaches in conflict prevention activities might provide a link with humanitarian assistance and development efforts (phase II and III) where activities should be placed in an economic focus, allowing for a more rational administration of funds? If donors always end up paying emergency and a part of reconstruction and development costs, an alternative approach would be to consider investing before a conflict erupts as a means of ensuring the stability and the continuous human and economic development of a country. It could well be a more effective approach to prevention activities.

PHASE II

The activities in humanitarian assistance have already been mentioned, if not prioritized. The following summarizes humanitarian assistance activities in conflict situations :

- 1) The first condition is access to population. If victims are not accessible, nothing can be done. It may sound obvious, but it is something which is often taken for granted. And it is not. There have been cases (in eastern Zaire in spring 97) where access to population was not granted. Consequently tens of thousands disappeared. So access (and adequate logistics means) is a condition for humanitarian assistance to take place.
- 2) The initial activity is (relative) protection. Through its presence among affected population, humanitarian assistance brings relative safety. Open massacres and hostilities will very rarely be committed in presence of international staff. Total protection is also an illusion, as the limits of protection have been discussed in the first chapter. But a minimum feeling of calm and safety must be given in order for the affected population to remain near humanitarian assistance staff. If people fear for their lives, they may not remain in a fixed place for any length of time. This might partly explain migrations among refugee camps.
- 3) The first concrete assistance is medical and nutritional. Since the initial overriding objective is saving lives, any injuries, wounds or life-threatening illnesses must be treated on the spot. In situations where access to victims has been delayed, a high level of severe malnutrition may require the urgent installation of a therapeutic feeding center.

- 4) At the same times essential relief activities must be started, chief among which water provision (oral rehydration corners in some warm countries) and food distribution. In cold countries (i.e. Bosnia), blankets, clothing and shelter may also constitute a vital aspect of humanitarian assistance. *All life-saving relief activities are not fixed but change according to prevailing local conditions and needs.*
- 5) Other activities, i.e. traditional medical consultations and treatments, sanitation activities, psycho-social care and other specific activities aiming at managing the crisis can then be started, which could be labeled as life-preserving activities..
- 6) Finally activities related to other phases (I or III, prevention or RRRD) can be implemented, once the crisis has been controlled.

Activities 1 and 2 are a pre-requisite for the provision of assistance, while activities 3 to 5 may well be undertaken simultaneously in certain cases where human resources and means are sufficient. Activities 6 are normally not undertaken until all other activities are being implemented.

PHASE III

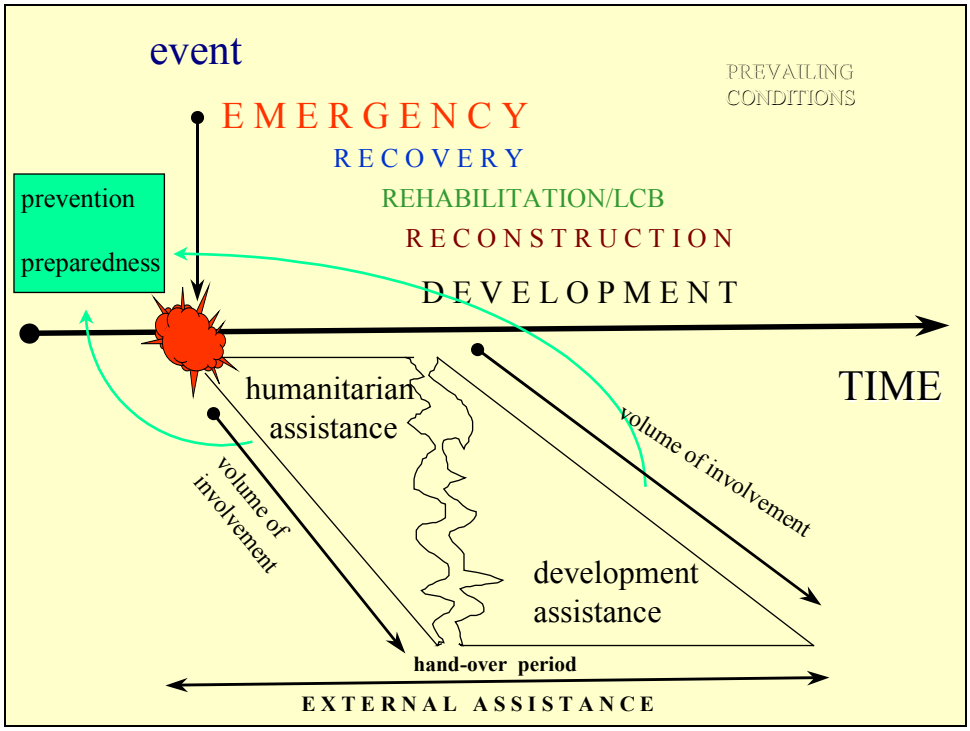
In the post-emergency phase a wide range of RRRD activities must be undertaken in order to resume normalcy and allow for balanced development to take place. The particulars characteristics of each sub-phase have been presented in the case of natural disasters, and are basically the same in case of conflicts.

The difficulty lies in determining which are the responsibilities of humanitarian assistance and development assistance in each sub-phase. In other words, interactions between types of assistance and sub-phases need to be clarified. It has already been mentioned that several concepts exist covering activities which are not typically emergency nor development. For example the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD presents three phases from relief to development : 1) emergency relief, with project objectives completed within 1 year, 2) Rehabilitation operations, with objectives completed within 2 years (which include recovery and reconstruction schemes), 3) Development operations, with long-term objectives.[90] But a division based on timeframe of objectives is not sufficient to explain interactions between each phase. It does not explain the division of labor between humanitarian and development assistance. A closer look at how an integrated approach combining effective coordination between both needs to be made.

While in the initial scheme, the unfolding of events seems to follow a linear progression, with clear boundaries between each phase and sub-phase, reality is more often than not very different. Realistic scenarios are in fact much closer to the following presentation :

2.2 Practical example of unfolding of events

[90] see "DAC guidelines on conflict, peace and development cooperation", p. 10, Box 1, 1998 draft.



Humanitarian assistance is initially an exceptional intervention. Therefore its activities must be limited in time. But because humanitarian assistance has extended its activities well beyond life-saving, it is not enough to limit the period of humanitarian assistance. It is also necessary to describe the type of activities which must be undertaken at every step, in close collaboration with and complementary to needs-based development assistance.

An imperfect but realistic working partnership is represented in the above scheme. Humanitarian assistance is working from the onset of the event with all necessary means to control the crisis and meet its primary objective : saving lives. As time passes and the crisis is being controlled, humanitarian assistance decreases intensity of operations, while activities extend progressively beyond protection, relief and medical attention. Once humanitarian assistance becomes involved in recovery, with QIPs, income generating projects and other small-scale recovery efforts, the focus of operations change on four accounts : a) beneficiary category shifts to community (and not every single individual), b) objectives are aimed at resuming normalcy (no longer life-saving), c) time-frame may well extend beyond the short term and impact may only be evaluated after humanitarian aid operations have subsided, d) projects should be cost-effective (or yield adequate cost-benefit ratio) as funding becomes a primary constraint, unlike in emergency where funding is a secondary constraint only (effectiveness is the primary objective).

While such projects are essential in fomenting sustainable humanitarian assistance, these two different types of activities may well follow a separate logic. The first, life-saving assistance, could reasonably well be evaluated through short-term cost and effectiveness indicators[91], while the second, contributing to recreating normalcy through recovery, rehabilitation and local capacity building projects, may follow

[91] It is necessary to present the various potential levels of evaluation of humanitarian assistance. Please refer to chapter four for details of the same. In this case mention of cost and effectiveness indicators is suggested for evaluation of overall results of humanitarian aid, not for specific activities (outputs) which may require cost-efficiency analysis.

longer-term objectives with different parameters (results may not necessarily be seen in the time that humanitarian assistance is on-going and there may be a degree of exclusion, unlike in emergency). In fact, the second type of activity may be very similar to that of development assistance, and should therefore follow a common approach within an integrated assistance framework. Is it then possible to distinguish between development assistance and secondary activities of humanitarian assistance? The answer requires a differentiated approach, since theory and practice may yield different answers.

In theory, the second type of activity in humanitarian assistance should already be covered by balanced development projects. As such, there should be no reason for humanitarian assistance to extend activities beyond life-saving.
In practice however, we have seen that transition from emergency to development may often leave uncovered gaps, which humanitarian assistance has temporarily come to fill. Humanitarian assistance has *de facto* become involved in providing a kind of social safety net, given its flexibility and its relative facility at obtaining funding and the lack of other players capable or willing to fill these gaps. It may be interesting to describe project characteristics in order to distinguish them from traditional development activities.

Secondary activities of humanitarian assistance could generally be described as presenting the following characteristics :
a) micro-projects or small-scale projects (i.e. never at macro level),
b) focusing on social vulnerability (e.g. rather than economic profitability),
c) involving directly or indirectly beneficiaries of primary assistance activities (community based, grass root implementation),
d) aimed at short to medium-term impact (i.e. not long-term),
e) focusing on cost-effectiveness rather than cost-benefit (i.e. not necessarily self-sustainable projects).

Humanitarian assistance could thus be divided into two separate sets of activity :

1) primary activities : life-saving and life-preserving activities undertaken in a short-term perspective with quantifiable results within the period of humanitarian assistance, and

2) secondary activities : life-preserving activities which contribute to recreate normalcy (includes all recovery, rehabilitation and capacity building activities), ranging from short to medium or long term, in a development perspective, with results not quantifiable within the period of humanitarian assistance.

Any attempt to evaluate the impact of humanitarian assistance should therefore consider each category separately since parameters to assess efficiency and effectiveness will vary from one type of activity to the other.

Humanitarian assistance has not traditionally been equipped nor designed to undertake reconstruction or development projects. However in practice the front-line players of humanitarian assistance are NGOs. Many of them have become active both in emergency and development. Some do so professionally, while others have become involved in one or the other simply because of opportunity, being in the right place at the right time (i.e. in Bosnia, Somalia, the Great Lakes). As such there is a major gap between UN agencies and donors, which do not possess an integrated approach in regards to funding for emergency and development, and some NGOs which may at times even receive twice the funding for a specific multisectoral

integrated project, once from emergency donors, another from development donors. As projects become more complex and include various different components, some emergency related and others development related, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify which funds have been allocated to which type of activity.

A practical and pragmatic approach to sustainable humanitarian assistance would require an integration of funding for emergency and development activities, in order to ensure a coherent, effective and efficient use of the funds from implementing partners. Concretely, this may call for an economic rationalization of humanitarian and development assistance.

CHAPTER FOUR. The need for economic rationalization of humanitarian assistance.

1. Economic and political aspects of humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian assistance has traditionally been presented as a neutral and impartial form of aid, seeking to save as many lives as possible. As such, its activities have been undertaken independently of any political consideration, with a view to succor all affected individuals regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity or religion. The overriding principle for provision of humanitarian assistance is thus theoretically based on need, excluding any political or social preferences. Humanitarian assistance has therefore largely managed to maintain impartiality through use of needs-based criteria.

Neutrality is a different concept which has probably become obsolete with the end of the Cold War. In case of natural disasters, humanitarian assistance can appear as neutral as there are no "sides" within the social environment. Assistance does not benefit any potentially threatening adversary. Not so in conflicts, where civilian population are an integral part of conflict strategy. Even if civilian population do not actively participate in bellicose activities, they are nonetheless a part of a fractured social environment. As such, population under zones of control of specific groups are naturally active or passive supporters of such groups. No war can be won without support from the population. Support can be internal (i.e. clans in Somalia, geographical division in Bosnia through ethnic cleansing) or external (i.e. Hutu refugee camps in Zaire, Salvadoran camps in Honduras, Afghan camps in Pakistan, or South African support to Mozambican Renamo guerrilla, etc.). As a consequence, any action with impact on population welfare cannot be considered as neutral, since strengthening local population will undoubtedly be negatively seen by opposing factions (i.e. as "strengthening the enemy"). Humanitarian assistance must remain impartial to remain credible. But it cannot realistically be considered neutral once civilian population are understood to form the backbone support of warring factions.[92] Any change in the economic situation of any one group might entail a change of balance of power in the region. Humanitarian assistance becomes thus an integral part of the economic environment in any given disaster, generating positive and negative direct and indirect effects, short and long-term consequences, which may at times even jeopardize its own objectives. In certain conflicts, humanitarian assistance might even become a highly coveted prize to be won.

1.1. Effects on local economy

Humanitarian assistance is as much subject to the local economy as a factor of change of said economy. To give an example, large scale relief operations (such as the 1994 Rwandan crisis) have a tendency to monopolize all available transport means during crisis periods. This reduces, sometimes significantly, commerce and trade as transport priority for humanitarian assistance provokes a crowding out effect on other economic sectors[93]. As demand for transport rises exponentially, local

[92] A comprehensive presentation of economic effects and use and abuse of humanitarian aid is made in "Economie des guerres civiles", op. cit., in particular the chapter "les économies de guerre dans les conflits internes", by J.-C. Rufin.

[93] "Actually all humanitarian aid navigating on Lake (Tanganyika) is meant for Rwandese refugees in Bukavu (Zaire) and Goma (Zaire). All Barundi boats are continuously mobilized by humanitarian organizations. As a result, we have a serious problem of supply of current consumption goods and industrial inputs". Letter from the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Burundi addressed to the Transport Minister, dated 23.11.94, published in the local press "Le Citoyen", No 39, 3.12.94, p. 4.

transport prices also rise as high as contractors are willing to pay carriers, and the final price will be set by market forces. But these operations are temporary, normally only valid in the short term, since long lasting relief is only an indicator of failure to resume normalcy, and therefore to some extent a partial failure of the secondary objective of humanitarian assistance.

Thus humanitarian assistance creates a need for increased transport capacity well beyond normal demand because of an extraordinary situation. But what will happen to this induced additional transport capacity when humanitarian aid operations finalize? Transport prices may sharply drop as a result of a low demand. Logically, any investor having acquired extra transport means to meet the initially increased demand will seek a rapid return on investments, given the temporary nature of relief operations. This is a simplified example of many which may be used to illustrate how humanitarian assistance is subject to the local economy while generating new opportunities but causing distortion of normal conditions. Other common examples are housing and warehousing rental costs in massive relief operations, which may increase out of proportion with the fees charged arrival of humanitarian aid. Any temporary economic activity undertaken specifically in a short-term perspective implies a quicker, therefore higher, rate of return on investments given the high level of uncertainty associated which characterizes humanitarian operations.

Assessing precisely the impact of humanitarian assistance on the local economy is extremely difficult, not to say impossible. Prevailing local conditions in conflicts often do not allow for an economic analysis to be undertaken, given one (or a combination) of the following factors, none of which is mutually exclusive : large informal sector, illicit and criminal activities, weak central state, fragmented society, absence of traditional market mechanisms (transition economies), high inflation, unstable currency.

Therefore impact quantification is hardly possible. But impact qualification is and requires an analysis divided into two different time-frames : 1) short-term impact, and 2) longer-term impact.

Economists know well that short-term and long-term effects often do not necessarily complement each other, and that specific measures taken to improve the economy in the short-term may end up yielding negative long-term results (and vice-versa).
The same could be said to be true of humanitarian assistance. Therefore any attempt to qualify effects of humanitarian assistance should distinguish between short-term and long-term effects. An example is given in the Burundi case study, presented as annex at the end of the book.

Natural disasters also strike conflict-prone countries, in which case the above limitations equally apply. But in situations where there is no conflict, humanitarian assistance normally exerts a reduced influence on the local economy, with as a general rule a much more modest display of resources than in conflicts. Perhaps this could be due to the different nature of primary and secondary emergencies (see chapter one). In primary emergencies, only local resources are available for life-saving activities. But in natural disasters, the risks of death in a secondary emergency phase is much more limited (to epidemics and health hazards but not directly caused by the human factor) than in conflicts (combats, physical and psychological violence and abuse according to political and military strategy of warring factions). Natural disasters by themselves, unlike conflicts, have rarely

attracted or required hundreds of NGOs to be present on the scene[94]. The more economically and socially developed a country, the smaller the level of external assistance required. Another factor which may explain the limited role of humanitarian assistance on local economies is the lack of "technical gaps" as a result of natural disasters which is sometimes invoked by humanitarian assistance to extend the length of its operations. One reason might be, for non conflict-prone countries, that development projects are already being implemented and that development staff is already present in the country. Since essentially the type of humanitarian assistance in natural disasters revolves around medical NGOs, and sometimes search and rescue teams, (in addition to sporadic rehabilitation activities where needed) with a short to medium-term time-frame, there is little risk to see an extension of activities into development.[95]

Another important point has to do with the amount of resources which are injected directly in the economy of the host country. Contrary to popular belief, there is a wide difference between the amount of resources raised and allocated and amounts spent locally.

1.2. Investment return rate

The Burundi case study (November 1993 to December 1995) at the end of the book shows that only a fraction of the total amounts committed to humanitarian assistance is spent locally[96]. The obvious question then is to know why and who most benefits from humanitarian assistance spending.

One of the reasons can be related to the structure of foreign aid and the often important percentage that food aid may represent both in terms of declared value (up to one third of pledges in the case of Burundi, *excluding* freight and transportation), and in terms of volume of all material assistance. Thus if US$ 100 millions are allocated for Burundi, already up to US$ 35 millions are represented by the value of food aid. However value of food aid is reported by the donor, which is in turn often exaggerated since the quality of commodities most often tends to be inferior to the standard quality which constitutes the market price of the goods. In other words a shipment of 1,000 tons of maize may be declared by the donor to be worth the equivalent of the CBT (Chicago Board of Trade) monthly referral price (i.e. the date of shipment influences the price). For example, if shipment is made in March 98 and the price per ton fluctuates around US$ 250,00/MT FOB, the declared value of the consignment might be US$ 250,000 (excluding freight). It does not matter that the maize might be old and infested by insects : nothing a good fumigation will not be able to solve. It matters little that the type of maize is not the one traditionally eaten by the local population : food donations come almost always from agricultural surpluses of the rich countries which are financed at high cost by the rich countries' taxpayers (more than half of the EU budget is used to finance the CAP - Common Agricultural Policy- and the indemnities and subventions allocated to European farmers). Therefore rather than financing costly high stocks of agricultural surpluses, it is preferable to ship them out as donations to countries in crisis, irrespective of the actual local needs and of the feasibility of purchasing locally the

[94] Politically induced famines, such as in Ethiopia in the seventies, or the alleged current famine in North Korea, are not considered as "natural" disasters.

[95] The overwhelming response and international involvement in Central America as a result of hurricane Mitch at the end of 1998 is a recent event which shows new trends in natural disaster mitigation strategies and which is presented in chapter six.

[96] On the *economic impact* of humanitarian aid in conflict situations, see the excellent case studies in "Economie des Guerres Civiles", op. cit.

needed commodities, in a more timely and possibly more cost-effective manner. No matter that local production and market mechanisms be severely affected by unnecessary imported food. Food aid becomes thus more a policy decision of donor countries than a needs-based program.

If one looks at other costs, such as freight and transportation, for the land-locked country of Burundi these amounted to some 45% of the total pledges (see case study, table 3.18, US$ 111 millions as compared to total appeals of US$ 251 millions). Again these are costs in order to ensure the arrival of material assistance in Burundi. Amounts spent locally very low as compared to the overall costs.

In the case of Burundi, between the declared value of food aid (15 to 35% of appeal figures) and other donations and freight and transportation costs of all material assistance (45% on average), the largest part of costs has been accounted for. And this does not even include the cost of services and of expatriate staff present in the country. Unofficial estimations from NGOs such as MSF Switzerland confirm that local spending is normally well under 30% of a project worth. So for every US$ donated for a country, less than thirty cents are spent locally.

Among those who are able to take advantage of humanitarian aid are international suppliers of vehicles and transport equipment and of telecommunication equipment to UN agencies, donors and NGOs. But apart from a legitimate interest of humanitarian aid providers to obtain the highest business volume possible (although some providers have also made important in-kind donations, such as that of a Japanese car maker of a whole fleet of 4x4 vehicles to the UNHCR during the Great Lakes crisis), there are also some vested economic interests more difficult to identify. The fact that humanitarian assistance does not follow an economic approach in the host country where operations are being undertaken does not necessarily mean that it is void of any economic logic.
In reality, it may be that economic motives behind humanitarian aid funding may not quite share its professed objectives.

While there appears to be no official study so far for humanitarian aid, some interesting information is available concerning official development assistance (ODA). According to Sylvie Brunel[97], the “investment return rate”, corresponding to the amount of money reverting to the donor country through the purchase of national goods and/or services ranges between 70 and 80% in the case of French ODA. More recently, an American private interest group was lobbying for a 50% increase of foreign assistance, given a return rate of over 80%![98] . If this is compared to the estimations of the amounts spent locally in humanitarian aid (less than 30%), then we can consider that only funds locally spent have not being used in financing, contracting or purchasing external goods and services.

If the return rate for humanitarian aid is anywhere near these figures, then it should come as no surprise that resources allocation in the host country may be infra-optimal. Donors’ undeclared economic objective could well be to maximize the return rate rather than ensuring optimal resource allocation in the host country. Such a focus naturally opens up a series of criticism which can be addressed to donor institutions : aid becomes a Keynesian tool to foment domestic growth while outwardly appearing to respond to humanitarian concerns. Large scale operations

[97] Sylvie Brunel, “Le gaspillage de l’aide publique”, Seuil, Paris, 1993, p. 57.
[98] Financial Times, 25 June 1996, article “Foreign Aid ‘benefits US’”, p. 5 : “foreign assistance programmes benefit the US economy because more than 80 per cent is spent in the US on American goods and services … the 1994 aid programme translated into 200,000 US jobs”.

such as the one undertaken in the Great Lakes (Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire, Tanzania) provide vast employment opportunities for UN agencies and NGOs of donor countries. Food aid donations allow donors to lower their costly agricultural surplus financed with taxpayer's money. Products having expired their life cycle can find new outlets. Increasing the return rate on donor funding may well play against efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid operations, by preferring nationality and other criteria over quality, professionalism or effectiveness.

Thus ambiguity of objectives behind humanitarian aid funding comes to light. The provision of humanitarian assistance essentially responds to specific needs, and normally strives to obtain the highest possible efficiency and effectiveness, especially during emergencies. Humanitarian assistance is impartial and does not discriminate among victims. But if funding for humanitarian assistance is earmarked for domestic products and services (i.e. pursuing a good return rate), this may affect efficiency and effectiveness of operations. The focus behind the funding allocation becomes : what are the best results which may be obtained while spending the money on national goods and services? Rather than : what are the most efficient and effective measures which could be funded yielding the best results? *If the main objective was to mitigate as much as possible the effects of a crisis, than local NGO's and institutions should be preferred over international NGOs, since they are the ones most capable of immediately undertaking life-saving activities given their presence near the place of disaster.* This has already been stressed in chapter one, yet generally only a very small fraction of all donor funding is allocated to local NGO's and institutions.

In practice funding of humanitarian aid generally includes a combination of factors. On the one hand, the traditionally operative and effective organizations with proven track records (such as MSF, ICRC, UNHCR, etc., to name only a few) are funded in emergencies because they are known to perform well in extreme situations. At the same time domestic NGOs have to be present on the spot as public opinion expects donor countries to place some nationals as life-savers (since government funding come from the taxpayer's money, it is fair enough to expect some kind of national representation -provided it is professionally organized-). As the crisis subsides and activities shift from life-saving and life-preserving to rehabilitation and development, effectiveness is no longer the single most important criterion and other considerations may take greater relevance. Therefore the return rate may take increasing importance in post-emergency situations. It is a very interesting exercise to ask to one's own government (its aid agency or cooperation department), what criteria are being followed for funding allocation in emergency situations, and more specifically how the total funding package is decided and divided among humanitarian aid agencies. Since there are no uniform practices any honest answer will recognize that political and economic considerations play an integral part of the decision making process (preference for national resources wherever possible).

In this case we may come across conflicting interests between the recognized objectives of humanitarian aid (life-saving and life-preserving most effectively) and the donors objectives (political considerations such as return rate and visibility in addition to life-saving and life-preserving). If the latter automatically went with the first, then there should be no problem. But we have seen above that maximizing effectiveness requires an economic rationalization of humanitarian assistance, in order to seek optimal resource allocation, whereas donor objectives include additional elements (political considerations) which may at times be incompatible, especially in cases where the return rate is expected to be maximized.

Despite those facts, rules and regulations already exist which should protect humanitarian aid from political considerations. Taking the example from one of the world's largest donors, the European Community, quoting from its Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid : "Whereas humanitarian aid, the sole aim of which is to prevent or relieve human suffering, is accorded to victims without discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic group, religion, sex, age, nationality or political affiliation and *must not be guided by, or subject to, political considerations*;".

It remains to be seen whether the member states of the EU and the donor community as a whole are increasingly willing to apply these guidelines, if indeed as the Council Regulation states "..humanitarian aid decisions must be taken impartially and solely according to the victims' needs and interests". We should strive to work towards having theory and practice merge.

Some eight years ago in Mozambique I was struck by a remark from the National Director of Agriculture : instead of funding costly long-term humanitarian aid operations, why not simply distribute the money among the affected population? While at the time I honestly could not find a satisfactory reply, looking at the return rate allows me to venture at least one hypothesis : money cannot simply be handed out to victims because, among other reasons, there is no return rate, in which case nothing reverts to the national economies of donor countries. Of course, reality is much more complex and cash incentives are certainly not always an adequate solution or substitute to humanitarian assistance. Still, if truly decisions must be taken in the victims' interests, the feasibility of cash incentives should seriously be studied in specific situations, perhaps as substitute for long-term food aid. Cash incentives scheme have already been applied in some cases (demobilization of former combatants in Mozambique, Angola, El Salvador, Guatemala, etc.). Under the form of so called micro-credits, small loans are increasingly gaining momentum both for rehabilitation and development projects, virtually without defaults. Famous examples such as the Grameen bank (and other similar institutions) are equally obtaining excellent results while actively promoting community participation, solidarity and self-reliance[99]. Results obtained clearly indicate this type of scheme as a model to follow.

1.2.1. Hypothesis regarding military - highest return rate

A similar argument could be held for military operations. It has already been mentioned that cost quantification of military interventions is a very difficult exercise, which meets strong resistance including at government level. So the return rate on military operations is even more difficult to assess precisely. However, when considering the special conditions which are applied to military activities (strategic considerations overrule economics, and equipment is designed to be fail-safe rather than cost-effective), it should be expected that the return rate be even higher, closer to 100%. This follows the logic of self-reliance that an army should possess during a conflict, in order to avoid dependency from a third party to deliver supplies or services. In other words, the army must be autonomous and rely on its own channels for the provision of all its manpower, goods and services without any flaws. It is a closed and protected economic circuit with a tremendously high return rate, certainly

[99] The Grameen bank (from the word *gram* meaning *village*) was founded by professor M. Yunus in 1983 in Bangladesh and specializes on small loans in socially and economically vulnerable communities. Today 94% of the 2.1 million customers are women and loan repayment is above 97%. See the article in Le Monde Diplomatique : "Transgresser les préjugés économiques," by Muhammad Yunus, December 1997.

even higher than ODA or humanitarian aid. In addition conflict situations are an excellent opportunity for the armament industry to test new weapons and obtain new contracts (such as for Patriot missiles in the Gulf war, or for the high technology weapons used in the NATO offensive on Yugoslavia in Spring 1999). At the same time conflicts put added pressure on governments not to reduce defense spending. As an example and expressed as percentage of 1995 GDP, the average allocated to defense costs for all countries with a high human development index is 2.6% as compared to 0.26% given as ODA for the same year[100]. In other words, the amounts granted for military expenditures by the world's richest countries are ten times that given as official development assistance. Nothing to be proud of.

So bringing military operations onto the scene of humanitarian aid incidentally also maximizes further the return rate, while providing a perfect excuse against the reduction of military spending. And yet the cost of military operations are still kept from the public. Sometimes bits of information are available : for example, the press has reported that the famous, technologically perfect stealth F-117 shot down in March 1999 near Belgrade during the NATO offensive was worth a meagre US$ 45 million[101], the same amount that was received by 22 January 1999 by the United Nations as a response to their transitional appeal for relief and immediate rehabilitation for six months in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Belize as a result of hurricane Mitch which affected over six million people and caused more than 18,000 deaths[102]. One executive from Lehman Brothers states that the allies have spent one hundred million dollars a day during the NATO offensive on Yugoslavia[103], bringing the total to 7.7 billion us dollars until NATO stopped bombings on 10 June 1999.

1.2.2 Local empowerment - modest return rate

As far as funding for local NGOs and organizations is concerned, a special effort should be undertaken. In fact this is part of the forward and backward linkages between D/P, humanitarian aid and development. Ideally local response should already have been build up through development aid, and local partners for crisis mitigation identified. Even before the crisis strikes, these local partners should be consulted in all matters of D/P. When the crisis erupts the potential partners are thus already identified and their contribution and impact may thus be enhanced if they receive adequate support from the start. Of course, one should be careful to differentiate between organizations which have existed before a war and those created during a war, since a large number of the latter are artificially created and used by the parts in conflict to take the largest possible advantage of humanitarian assistance. It is thus just as important to identify the qualified and adequate local partners as it is to build up their capacity.

One local organization often used to participate in humanitarian assistance efforts is the national Red Cross (or Red Crescent) society of the host country. Because it traditionally possesses an extensive network of volunteers countrywide, such an organization is able to mobilize quickly its members and becomes a desirable partner

[100] UNDP Human Development Report 1997, op. cit., p. 214 for aid flow and p. 215 for defence expenditures
[101] EL PAÍS, 29 March 1999, p. 4.
[102] See UNOCHA Situation Report No 16 of 22 January 1999 point 3 for country figures. Additionally US$ 6.5 million were received for assistance to Nicaragua, bringing the overall total of contributions for the region to US$ 51.5 million.
[103] EL PAÍS, 8 June 1999, p. 6

for international NGOs and organizations. It has often been an implementing agent for food and relief distributions and a valuable asset in camp management. There are other equally valuable local organizations such as the numerous church groups of all confessions, although there have been situations in which religious considerations were better left aside, being one of the arguments used to feed the conflict (Bosnia). When religion becomes a part of the crisis, religious groups can normally only act in favor of their brethren, and confession becomes a criterion for assistance. Other groups include the Scouts association, which, when and where existing (such as in Burundi), has the advantage to include the country's youth and can prove a valuable vector for D/P among other activities. Special attention should also be given to those organizations which operate in the informal sector.

The list of potential local partners can be extensive and is always context-specific.
But support to local organizations may not offer as good a return rate as that of international humanitarian aid funding, which could perhaps explain the comparatively small support generally received. Traditionally local organizations have also had a credibility problem (allegations of corruption, mismanagement, etc.). But this could easily be solved by requesting a financial audit from internationally recognized firms (such as Price Waterhouse Coopers). Mistrust from international donors can be lifted at little cost for those local organizations which are willing to be more actively involved in aid, tapping into the flow of international funding available.

Local organizations' support should not be limited to the period of international humanitarian assistance, as has commonly been the case. In other words, the aim is not for international assistance to take advantage of the local resources available in order to meet its short-term objectives, but to constructively support and build up a durable local capacity in order to prepare and enhance D/P, crisis response and mitigation measures (including community based development activities where possible) at local level, in the best of cases even before disaster strikes. However this is seldom done because forward planning is rarely part of humanitarian assistance activities which tend to be reactive by nature, focusing more on mitigation than on early warning and prevention activities. In fact, insecurity and uncertainty in conflict-prone countries tend to indicate that such support could turn to be a bad investment, since there is no guarantee that the efforts undertaken to build up the local capacity will be available when needed. This is in fact the main argument used to justify the drying up of development funding in crisis situations.

Again it is important that links between D/P, humanitarian assistance and development be understood. Local capacity building should be an integral part of development policies, covering technical support and training in D/P, humanitarian assistance and development. The case study of Burundi shows that all development efforts undertaken for many years have been obliterated by the recurrent crises (1993,94,96). So the cost of these crises is for Burundi and its people much higher than simply humanitarian aid costs and the toll in human lives : it includes the value of all efforts undertaken during the previous years in the social, political and economic spheres, in addition to all lost opportunities. And these opportunity costs are quite high.

Conflicts are nothing less than the visible results of failed development policies. The remedy does not lie in amputating a broken arm, but in healing it. Consequently development funding must not be reduced because it has failed. What must be reviewed is development policies, prioritizing adequate programs (e.g. context specific solutions) and activities (focusing more on human components, on social stability, on vulnerability, on community-based participatory quick impact projects)

rather focusing solely on long-term macro-economic results. All with increased funding for D/P and development activities, in a holistic, integrated and pragmatic approach to human development. Maybe this could contribute to reducing the dreaded "donor fatigue" which appears when no solutions are in sight in the case of long-lasting humanitarian crisis (i.e. Great Lakes, Bosnia).

1.3 Political considerations in humanitarian aid

Despite the alleged and theoretical independence of humanitarian aid in regards to political considerations, a certain number of political motives exist around humanitarian operations. One must then differentiate between the political considerations on the ground, in the host country where humanitarian aid is taking place, and political considerations of donors which affect funding allocation to humanitarian aid.

A. Local politics in the operating environment

Humanitarian aid operations on the ground do not follow political considerations. However, humanitarian aid must also abide by the rules of the country where it is operating, and as such is subject to the political pressures of the host country. Possibly the best example of this has to do with a country's acceptance of refugees. During the 1994 crisis in Rwanda, the Mobutu dictatorship was quick to accept the huge influx of Rwandan refugees in Zaire, despite the added burden that such a massive refugee presence represented for the environment and the local economies. Not only was president Mobutu looking at the direct benefits that could be reaped resulting from a large-scale international humanitarian operations on its territory, but he was equally concerned about regaining some credibility on the international scene. In less than a year, Mobutu went from international pariah to humanitarian hero after accepting the 2.5 million refugee caseload. In addition to such public recognition, substantial concessions of all types and increased cooperation agreements (including military) were also obtained from a number of donor countries in exchange for Mobutu's generous gesture...

So while humanitarian aid is in itself a needs-based, impartial activity, it cannot impede that it be used or exploited by others nor can it totally isolate itself from political considerations. Humanitarian aid may be capable of resisting political pressures by following clear objectives and criteria, but it may not avoid political maneuvering of its operating environment. Politics are a fundamental part of any human environment. So while humanitarian aid "must not be guided by, or subject to, political considerations", it must nonetheless be aware of political implications in its everyday work, in order to avoid becoming a tool used by others. This may allow it to pursue its valuable work despite these constraints. Humanitarian aid must follow its own objectives. Using humanitarian politics.

Humanitarian aid may resort to a series of options when local political pressures become too high. The most obvious and radical solution is the suspension of activities until pressures are lifted or eased. This however occurs very seldom since victims' lives and well-being may be jeopardized by the suspension of humanitarian aid activities and such an act may not necessarily guarantee the lifting of political pressures on humanitarian aid. Short-term suspension of activities has happened a few times in recent humanitarian aid history, sometimes in protest for arbitrary killing of humanitarian aid staff (i.e. ICRC in Chechnya in 1996). But suspension of activities or withdrawal can also be the result of an NGO's own decision. For

example, in January 1995 in Bukavu (Zaire), MSF France decided to pull out because of the large military and militia presence among the Rwandese refugees. As a result assistance was being controlled and exploited by some of the same people accused of committing acts of genocide in Rwanda. According to the OAU convention, these people were not eligible for obtaining the refugee status. However the withdrawal of MSF France in this case did not have a "snowball" effect and most other NGO's did not follow the example (including other MSF national branches).

Without resorting to extremes, humanitarian aid most commonly uses a conjunction of the following options :

1) mobilizing public opinion through the media (press, television and/or radio interviews or statements denouncing pressures)
2) mobilizing donor support to obtain the release of pressures (political and economic pressures on the local government)
3) obtaining diplomatic and international support (UN, regional organizations and governments) for their actions

But it still lacks the political tools for conflict resolution and must therefore act only in conflict mitigation activities. Unless humanitarian politics are able to bring some change to the current politics and the aid structure.

B. Donors' political considerations

When political considerations relate to donor funding, the issue becomes more delicate. All humanitarian aid organizations rely to some extent on external funding for their activities. Most United Nations agencies totally depend on international contributions from member states to cover their operational costs. Among the NGO community, most organizations possess their own fund-raising channels (charity sales, fund-raising concerts, membership fees, etc.) which gives them an independent source of income. This allows for certain projects to be implemented without any donor participation, financed by the organization's own assets. However in general an NGO will more likely spend its own funds on activities which have little or no donor support. In large-scale spectacular emergencies, such as in the Great Lakes, the level of donor funding was commensurate with media exposure, and huge sums were made available for humanitarian operations.

Funding agreements traditionally follow a cost-sharing arrangement, which means that part of the budget should be covered by the organizations' own funds. While the part of "self-financing" varies greatly from case to case, in large-scale emergencies it can amount to very little, down to practically nothing, of the total budget. This yet raises another question as to the status of an NGO. If as the name indicates an NGO is a Non-Governmental Organization, should it be acceptable that certain operations be funded by donor governments for more than half (if not at times all) of total costs. In other words, can an NGO still be considered as Non-Governmental if most of its funding in a given operation proceeds from government donations? Of course this allows to protect the victims' interest. It would be absurd not to provide the necessary assistance to the affected population on the grounds that the NGO was not able to bring a sufficient share of the budget. So while in order not to jeopardize operations such procedures can well be accepted, it nonetheless raises questions as to how much distance exists in NGO-government relations. However an answer can be ventured to explain these apparently abnormal situations. A government's decision depends on the weighing out of a series of considerations (strategic, political, economic, etc.), which may or may not meet humanitarian aid's objectives. In those cases where the majority of funding to an NGO is provided by a government, it can be said that humanitarian objectives have outweighed other

considerations (or at least that enough pressure may have been put on the government into prioritizing humanitarian aid's objectives over other considerations). And this is just what the objectives of humanitarian politics are all about.

From some donor's perspective and from a strictly bureaucratic point of view, it may at times take the same amount of paperwork to finance a 50,000 US$ project than a 500,000 US$ project. It may therefore be preferable and easier to monitor ten half a million dollar projects than a hundred fifty thousand dollar ones. In other words, there is a tendency in large-scale emergencies to favor macro projects over micro projects, irrespective of impact. This favors the largest organizations and may affect the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Traditionally funding in emergencies is given in exchange for an organization's technical capacity in life-saving and life-preserving activities. In other words, what is being financed is the specific knowledge of a given organization which allows it to be effective in an emergency. But if the paperwork is the same notwithstanding allocations, this may generate a tendency to push some organizations to become involved in activities in which they have traditionally no technical skill in order to justify a higher budget and consequently increase their chance of obtaining funding. On the other hand and as seen from the victim's perspective, humanitarian aid always comes late. Therefore funding a multisectoral integrated project for a half a million may offer improved operational effectiveness over a cheaper project focusing on a single component. *Thus if funding can be used for multisectoral integrated projects it may actually enhance effectiveness and avoid sectoral gaps*, provided the implementing organization possesses the adequate *savoir-faire*. This is already being done by some, such as the UNHCR which enters into sub-contracting arrangements with NGOs and other operational partners in the camps its manages. As a fictitious example, if the HCR in Burundi received 15 million US$ from the World Bank for multisectoral assistance to refugees and displaced, it may have used 10 million for its own operating costs, and divided the remaining 5 million to fund the various NGO's working in the camps, in order to ensure that the entire integrated package of multisectoral assistance was being given to the victims. In this way all sectors which form a part of essential assistance are covered.

So the tendency to finance large organizations and macro projects may not negatively affect effectiveness of humanitarian aid provided specific technical skills are present either directly among the fund recipient and/or sub-contracted agencies. But the approach used should always guarantee that all aspects of vulnerability have been targeted.

In order to avoid political considerations at the time of funding allocation, a suggestion could be that donors should jointly define standard guidelines and criteria for funding of aid organizations. Such commonly agreed standards should be made public so that both humanitarian aid organizations and public opinion be aware of criteria for funding. As such, funding decisions could follow a certain economic rationalization, prioritizing quality, professionalism, efficiency, effectiveness and durability over other considerations not representing the victims' interests. Transparency in donor requirements and in reporting may be an important means to avoid politicization of humanitarian aid

Faced with these difficulties, a growing number of humanitarian aid organizations have supported the Code of Conduct developed by the IFRC, which clearly stipulates and addresses many aspects of this problem as well as others. This Code of Conduct is reproduced as annex at the end of this book. Given its sensible recommendations, it is hoped that it be accepted and applied as widely as possible,

not only by humanitarian aid agencies, but also by the entire donor community, while becoming widely known and supported by the general public (e.g. civil society). Since then further concrete steps have been taken : by November 1998 the preliminary edition of the SPHERE project was completed, which through a broad coalition of 700 individuals from over 228 agencies in over 60 countries, has contributed to the elaborating a Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (i.e. that is, for each area if activity - food, water, sanitation, etc.).[104]

2. Costs of humanitarian assistance

A major economic aspect of humanitarian assistance has to do with its costs. In many recent operations, costs can be astounding when compared to local economies. For example, global funding allocated to the 1994 regional crisis (Rwanda/Burundi) for all humanitarian assistance players (UN, NGOs, Red Cross, etc.) amounted to US$ 1,012,242,585 according to UNDHA[105], equivalent to 118% of Burundi's 1994 GDP! Another source yet estimates at 1.4 billion US dollars costs of provision of humanitarian assistance inside Rwanda and to Rwandese refugees in neighboring countries from April to December 1994.[106] If these amounts are compared to the US$ 100.5 millions official development aid contributions to Burundi for 1994[107], humanitarian assistance is at least ten times more important in volume.

In 1994, record year for humanitarian aid expenditures, DAC's [108]contributions for humanitarian aid (emergency food aid and contributions to emergency operations) reached about 6 billion US Dollars, roughly 10 per cent of their total official development assistance[109].

Unfortunately, it is widely acknowledged that funding for humanitarian assistance drains funding for development projects, when what is needed is just the opposite. Once a crisis has been controlled it is of paramount importance to ensure that sufficient funding is already available to resume balanced development. This implies previous ground work, and given slow funding availability for development, that funding be faster and more flexible.

While global humanitarian assistance costs are difficult to calculate precisely given the variety of funding sources, there are nonetheless quantifiable. Cost quantification is a first step to assess the effectiveness of a humanitarian aid operation. When one considers the significant amounts used to fund humanitarian assistance, it is legitimate to expect operations to be carried out effectively and rationally. We have seen in chapters two and three that cost and effectiveness analysis might be most adequate to evaluate overall humanitarian assistance. Hence the need to quantify costs. An economic analysis of humanitarian assistance also raises the need for

[104] details available at www.sphereproject.org
[105] United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for persons affected by the crisis in Rwanda, January-December 1995, volume III, Annexes, UNDHA, Geneva, January 1995, p. 25.
[106] Alistair Hallam, op. cit., p. 7.
[107] UNDP, "Effets de la crise et de l'aide humanitaire sur l'économie du Burundi - implications pour le PNUD", Bujumbura, November 1995, chart 3 p. 22. According to UNDP total foreign assistance for 1994 was US$ 215 million, including 114 millions for "emergency aid".
[108] The DAC - Development Assistance Committee - is a specialized committee of the OECD. It comprises twenty-one member nations and the European Community. Member countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.
[109] Alistair Hallam, op. cit. p. 1.

rationalization of costs in order to enhance effectiveness and avoid draining of funds from other activities.

In the previous chapter we have also seen that humanitarian assistance can be divided in primary activities (emergency life-saving and/or life-preserving activities with short-term perspective and quantifiable results) and secondary activities (life-preserving activities contributing to recreation of normalcy -RRRD activities as well as prevention and preparedness-, with a development perspective, spreading into longer-term). Because objectives and parameters and thus effectiveness of each category are different, different denominators apply. Therefore each category must be analyzed separately. This implies that recipients of humanitarian assistance funds should also account separately for emergency/life-saving activities and activities which contribute to recreate normalcy.

2.1 Cost analysis

An analysis of costs raises three basic questions : what costs, what types of costs and costs for whom.

A. Which costs?

Costs in humanitarian aid are many and the lack of standardised financial procedures and funding allocation procedures makes cost analysis a seriously difficult activity. In addition various different national accounting systems allow for substantially different types of reporting on humanitarian aid spending[110]. Nevertheless costs may be divided into various categories, the labels of which will vary according to the donor, namely :

- operational costs

  - These costs determine the inputs necessary for an operation (human and material resources, logistics, private contractors, etc.). The following is an example of budget lines headings contained in one of the donor's operations contract :

1.0 **Staff**
1.1 Expatriate staff
  1.1.1. Specialised staff
  1.1.2. support staff
  1.1.3. back-up staff
1.2 Local staff
  1.2.1. Specialised staff
  1.2.2. support staff
  1.2.3. back-up staff
2.0 **Food stuffs**
3.0 **Logistic goods**
3.1 Logistic products
3.2 special logistic equipment

[110] See as an example the difficulties experienced by the Study III team of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda both in terms of financial information collection and in terms of cost-effectiveness analysis. It proved impossible to obtain figures from the military to compare overall cost-effectiveness of military and civilian operations. However the study does conclude that on the basis of the evidence available, civilian operations appear to be more cost-effective, even if no figures can be presented (except for air transportation services).

4.0 **Medical**
4.1 Medical equipment
4.2 medical material
4.3 medicines
4.4 survival kits
4.5 medical kits
4.6 pharmaceutical kits
5.0 **Transport**
5.1 International transport carried out by the partner
5.2 local transport carried out by the partner
5.3 subcontracted international transport
5.4 subcontracted local transport
6.0 **Lease/rental of equipment**
6.1 lease/rental of communications equipment
6.2 other goods rented/leased
7.0 **Distribution costs**
8.0 **Local storage**
9.0 **Other subcontracted services**
10. **Special services**
11. **Training**
12. **Contingency reserve**

- programme support costs

  - These costs normally represent the costs of support given to field operational units (i.e. from headquarters, regional delegations, etc.) for a given project or programme

- contingency/overhead costs

- Contingency costs represent spending in response to unforeseen exceptional circumstances which require an urgent change outside the planned and budgeted activities. Overhead costs are sometimes included as part of contingency, or other times they may be included in programme support costs.

- financial / administrative costs

  - These costs represent financial services (banking commissions, interests, etc.) and all administrative expenditures. Sometimes audits are included in these costs.

- foreign exchange fluctuations costs

  - Donors allocations are traditionally expressed in terms of their national currencies. But most often implementing partners spend funds in different currencies than that in which funds were received. Consequently there can be important foreign exchange fluctuations which may positively or negatively affect the budget of an operation. These are sometimes included in the financial and administrative costs.

B. Types of costs

Humanitarian aid costs deal with the expenditures necessary to undertake a specific operation. As such it could be argued that all its costs are direct costs, as opposed to the indirect costs induced by the presence humanitarian assistance.
But the presence of humanitarian assistance also produces a series of costs, related to the impact of its presence : social, economic as well as political.

Such a valuation is extremely difficult and has raised little interest. In general only costs related to operational expenditures necessary to humanitarian aid are analysed. It would certainly prove useful if donors and academic research institutions were to encourage further investigation on the consequences and costs of humanitarian aid in the social, economic and political sectors, especially in view of the sustainability and impact of long-lasting humanitarian operations and its crippling effect on local capacity building and development.

C. The third question in cost analysis could well be : “costs for whom?”

This question defines the perspective from which the analysis is undertaken. Five different angles can be identified :

- Beneficiaries

  - From the perspective of beneficiaries, humanitarian assistance is *essentially free*, especially during the acute emergency phase. Some exceptions may apply in specific cases for the distribution of relief items, and particularly food aid, which has been used in “food for work” or “money for work” projects.
    In the first case, beneficiaries “pay” for food assistance by lending their workforce during a time to complete a specific task, normally in the interest of the beneficiary community (road construction, dike construction, shelters, etc.).
    In the “money for work” schemes, beneficiaries are paid for their work, giving them access to market goods.
    However humanitarian aid is correctly so, increasingly becoming involved in monetary schemes (food for work/money for work, micro-credits, income generating activities with pay-back schemes, etc.), especially after the acute emergency phase. One reason for this trend is to lessen the “dependency syndrome” engendered by free assistance and its well-known negative effects. Another is to foment the dignity of beneficiaries, and the positive psychological impact of beneficiary participation (“I am able to contribute personally through my actions at recreating my world” type of thinking).
    Other reasons could be the relative success of these activities in restoring an acceptable living environment for beneficiaries and the sustainability of said schemes.

- Local implementing partners (NGOs and organisations)

  - Local partners are more often than not overlooked by the flow of international humanitarian aid. Yet, where and when available, local implementing partners can be most valuable in increasing effectiveness of humanitarian aid, for various reasons :
    a) Because they know the local language and cultural habits;
    b) Because they know how to build on local copying mechanisms rather than on “imported” schemes;
    c) Because their presence in the region before disaster strikes gives them two important advantages over international implementing partners : a faster

access to beneficiaries, and a very low marginal cost as compared to the cost of deployment of international organisations.

Thus from the perspective of local implementing partners, humanitarian aid represents important opportunity costs. However the international flow of aid still places international implementing agencies as preferred funding choice.

- Local government

  - From the perspective of local government, humanitarian aid is often a mixed blessing. Because humanitarian assistance items are “duty-free” (e.g. not subject to taxation), governments may not take advantage of the presence of humanitarian aid to obtain new budgetary resources. In addition the “brain drain” of qualified staff which prefer to work for international organisations because of comparatively much better conditions only adds to the pauperism of often already reduced and depleted human resources in government.
    On the positive side, humanitarian aid brings an injection of fresh funds into countries in which the banking system has not collapsed (i.e. Burundi in 1994). Similarly humanitarian aid can exert a positive effect in several economic sectors (transport, industries related to the manufacture of humanitarian aid goods or the provision of humanitarian aid services, or indirectly in activities such as tourism, restaurants, etc.). In those countries where a functional tax system exists, increase in economic activities translates into higher tax revenues.

- Local contractors

  - Provided they are in an activity related directly or indirectly to humanitarian aid, local contractors may make substantial profit from a humanitarian aid operation. Examples abound where private transport companies, local manufacturers (soap, blankets, etc.), security companies to name just a few have been able to obtain exceptional results (Mozambique, Great Lakes, Bosnia). Indirect activities (housing rentals, restaurants, luxury goods, tourism) have also often benefited from the presence of a large international expatriate community.

- International implementing partners

  - International implementing partners are the primary recipients of humanitarian aid funding. From this perspective, humanitarian aid costs are the amounts needed in order to adequately address identified needs. Costs thus represent the sum of all components needed to ensure a successful intervention (material and human resources, relief items, distribution material, transport, communications, etc.). But costs may not always be a primary constraint for implementing organisations, limiting outright the scope and extent of their activities. Because additional funding can be obtained as a result of media coverage, public opinion pressure and fund raising activities, costs in humanitarian emergencies are only a secondary constraint. The primary concern is to reach the priority objective(s). In addition sudden changes in the situation may call for a reformulation of or an increase in funding needs. Costs are thus an important, but by no means binding, element of humanitarian aid operations. Cost analysis must be flexible enough to adapt to the changing scenarios of cost-spending in humanitarian aid operations.

- Donors

- From a donor perspective, humanitarian aid costs are the result of funding allocations based on media coverage, public opinion, and political opportunity. Since the overwhelming bulk of humanitarian aid costs are channelled though international implementing partners, cost-perspective from donors is essentially that of accountability. “Account-ability” is the justification as to how funds are spent and for which purpose. The most common form is financial accountability, most widely requested by donors. This form of accountability is more concerned on book-keeping and accounting errors and omissions than on the actual effectiveness or impact of the money spent.

  Notwithstanding the need for correct financial reporting, another form of accountability is operational accountability. This approach focuses more on beneficiary participation and end results. It seeks primarily to ensure that activities will be effective and have a positive impact on beneficiaries. Implicitly financial reporting comes as a second priority. From an ethical perspective, a successful operation with minor financial mistakes is preferable to an ineffective operation, albeit with complete and detailed financial records.

2.1.1 Cost indicators

The same as there are different types of cost there can be as many types of cost indicators (cost per metric ton of relief item transported, cost per litre of water supplied, cost of medical care per patient, etc.). In line with the approach followed and looking at the suggestions of the first two chapters which tends to focus on overall outcome of humanitarian aid operations, the type of indicator retained is the costs to caseload ratio, as expressed by the average cost per person assisted (a.c.p.p.a.), determined by the total expenditures divided by the total caseload figure. Its use is discussed in the Burundi case study included as annex.

Basic assumptions of the cost per person assisted concept are :

a) that costs alone are irrelevant unless compared to a caseload (i.e. thus giving both an idea of the magnitude of the people requiring humanitarian assistance and its average cost per person);
b) that it is possible to obtain and monitor reasonably acceptable beneficiary caseload figures;
c) that costs are not category specific (it matters little whether beneficiaries are residents, refugees or displaced population). Thus population movements and migrations do not affect the overall caseload of beneficiaries;
d) that costs are not sector specific (each form of assistance is given equal relevance, be it protection, food aid, medical care, etc.) To benefit from at least one form of assistance is the condition to be included in the caseload.

As with any indicators, limitations naturally apply. The source of information on costs are based on the UNDHA appeals. As such, the following difficulties must be mentioned:

a) Contributions and pledges to the appeals are recorded by UNDHA in dollars, whereas donors report their contribution in their own national currency. This gives rise to wide differences according to the appreciation or depreciation of each national currency as compared to the US dollars.
b) there is no systematic cost-reporting system used by donors for particular activities, making compilation and cost-comparison per activity impossible;

c) there is no standard manner to report the value of in-kind donations; as a result donors are free to declare values greater than real market prices in order to inflate the amount donated (i.e. food aid)

3. Economic evaluation of humanitarian assistance

From the perspective of economic rationalisation, three types of analytical methods have traditionally been used for evaluation : cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness and multi-criteria methods (méthodes multicritères). A fourth method, called the "effects method", essentially applies at macro-economic level and will only be briefly presented.

1) Cost-benefit analysis : initially cost-benefit analysis has been used in the private sector for investment decisions, in order to determine the optimal return rate on an investment among different options. The principle of the analysis is simple : by using one single monetary unit (Euro, US dollar or any other currency), both costs and advantages (inputs and outputs) of the project can be compared and a measure of absolute project worth can be obtained. This method is widely used in projects where advantages can be easily expressed in monetary terms.

   However when projects deal with intangible benefits, such as time, human suffering, human life, etc., the method must resort to the use *shadow prices.* Non-marketable items must therefore obtain a fictitious price, or *shadow price*, to fit into an analysis where the single unit of measurement is money. The main problem lies in the choice of these shadow prices and raises the always difficult issue of pricing human life and suffering. But for projects which essentially yield economic advantages, cost-benefit can be a valuable tool.

2) Cost-effectiveness analysis : given the limitations of the shadow-pricing method, an alternative approach was introduced with cost-effectiveness analysis. In this method, a single non-monetary (but measurable) indicator is defined as the objective to be met. The two criteria are then the degree of realisation of the objective, or effectiveness, and its net present value. This method has often been used in sectors where cost-benefit analysis alone was unable to provide guidance in view of the intangible benefits resulting from the project. Widely used in health economics and welfare economics, cost-effectiveness does not however provide a net global value for a project, and can only be used to compare between different options.

   Two different approaches to cost-effectiveness are used :
   a) the "least-cost combination" or "constant effects" method, which essentially seeks to minimise costs while achieving the fixed level of objective (i.e. can the same health benefits be provided more cheaply through construction of more clinics manned by paramedical personnel but with fewer large hospitals?[111] Can the same quantity of food aid be delivered by barge at lower cost than by rail?)

   b) The "constant cost" method essentially seeks to maximise the objective per unit cost. In this method costs are fixed, while impact (or effectiveness) must be enhanced. It essentially answers the question : How can one unit cost best be used to achieve the desired objective? (i.e. will one us dollar spent on barge transportation allow for a bigger load than rail transportation?)

[111] Alistair Hallam, "Cost-effectiveness analysis : a useful tool for the assessment and evaluation of relief operations?", Network paper 15, ODI London, 1996, p. 4.

3) Multi-criteria analysis (méthodes multicritères). Several methods which all follow a similar approach. Rather than retaining a single indicator, such as cost-effectiveness methods, a number of criteria are identified and numbered (i.e. number of lives saved, amount of suffering avoided, budgetary costs, etc.). Aggregation of these elements is simply not possible. In multi-criteria analysis, the decision maker gives a number to each element from a determined value-scale (for example 0 to 10), which represents the relative value of each criteria taken independently. The ranking allows for the least valued elements to be discarded until eventually only one remains. These methods are most useful when various decision-makers hold opposite views and are unable to come to an agreement on a preferred option.

4) Finally another method also exists at macro-economic level, labelled "effects method" (méthode des effets). The objective, as in the other methods, is to determine the costs and benefits of the project, but as seen from the perspective of the national economy. As such one must compare the situation "without" the project and the new situation created with the project - at macro-economic level and for all economic units affected. The evaluation is based on the increase in the total net added value and its distribution among the economic units as defined by national accounts. However the level of information requested to perform such an analysis may not always render it feasible - or applicable to all humanitarian aid situations.

3.1. Summary of strengths and weaknesses of each method

METHOD	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Cost-benefit	- gives overall net present value of a project -a single monetary unit is used to express costs and benefits	- difficult to use for intangible benefits (human life, suffering) - must resort to "shadow prices"
Cost-effectiveness (least-cost method)	- allows to compare between various projects by selecting a single, non-monetary but measurable indicator	- no overall global worth of a project can be obtained
Cost-utility (constant cost)	- seeks to determine among projects where funding allocation will yield greater utility	- same as cost-effectiveness - implies a questionable quality valuation of life-years (DALY and QALY)
Multi-criteria	- allows to compare projects with various indicators by ranking indicators through use of a set value scale. - can be useful when decision makers hold conflicting priorities	- no overall global worth of a project can be obtained
Effects method	- gives overall net present value with two scenarios (both with and without the project) - assesses both direct and indirect effects	- macro-economic analysis - the level of information necessary may not render it applicable to humanitarian aid

3.2. Recent applications of evaluation in the health sector

Economic rationalisation has been used in all sectors of activity, from the perspective of government's budgetary constraints. Evaluation tools have been used either with the same perspective, or by private investors as a tool to decide on possible investments. Among the uses made of these tools, those of the health sector are most closely related to the concern of humanitarian assistance. Because major concerns in health share the same humanistic concerns as humanitarian aid (e.g. life-saving and life-preserving with dignity), research and experience made can prove valuable in humanitarian aid operations.

Among the chief concerns in health are number of patient lives saved, quality of treatment, impact of treatment. Much the same as in humanitarian aid. However when dealing with the health sector, it is implicitly understood that funding for health comes from government and that budgetary constraints exist in order to maximise the resources. Choices must therefore be undertaken which may not always prove entirely ethically satisfying, whereas such choices would not have to be taken if budget limitations did not exist.

To solve the methodological problem posed in cost-effectiveness by using two different approaches (see points 2) a) and b) above) health economists have suggested that cost-effectiveness be essentially used to describe least-cost combination methods.

Because research has yielded new indicators such as QALY (Quality-Adjusted Life Years) and DALY (Disability-Adjusted Life Years) which essentially involve valuation of quality of life years through the use of utility coefficients, the constant-cost method has come to be labelled as cost-utility as opposed to cost- effectiveness (which is always expressed in natural units).[112]

Organisations such as the World Bank and the WHO are currently using cost-utility methods in order to compare the benefits from health expenditures in different parts of the world.

Citing from A. Hallam : "Although there are criticisms of this sort of approach, the method is currently being extended by organizations like WHO and the World Bank, so that the benefits of expenditure on health interventions in different parts of the world can be compared. On the basis of historical epidemiological data, diseases are ranked in terms of their impact or burden on affected populations. By assessing how different degrees of disability affect the quality of life, this burden is expressed using single indicators, such as the Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) or the Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY).

Predictions are made as to the effectiveness of specific health interventions in reducing the incidence of disease. The costs of intervention can then be related to the QALYs or DALYs that would be gained or lost. For example, US$ 100 might pay for 20 children to be vaccinated against meningitis in a particular region of Bangladesh which, given the incidence of the disease and the effectiveness of the

[112] For further information see A. Labourdette, op. cit., chapter 4, M. Drummond, "Les méthodologies de l'évaluation économique des médicaments", in Projections - La Santé au futur, No 4, J.-P. Moatti, "Economie de la santé : les choix implicites" and R. Launois, "L'évaluation économique des stratégies thérapeutiques", in Annales des Mines, Juillet-août 1991

vaccine, would be expected to prevent 4 cases of meningitis, resulting in one death less and reduced disability in two individuals, equivalent to a gain of, say, 50 QALYs.

Once this work is completed, it should theoretically be possible to see where expenditure of a single US dollar on healthcare would have the most impact worldwide, be it on dialysis machines in the UK or on cold chains in Somalia".[113]

3.3. Differences between health and humanitarian aid

There are many similarities between health and humanitarian aid concerns and objectives. However there are also substantial differences.

1) The form of financing is quite different. Health is a basic necessity which needs to be planned and budgeted year after year by each government. Not so in humanitarian aid, which is not always planned or prepared in advance by donor governments (although there are contingency funds set aside for emergencies). Rather, response has been on *ad hoc* basis, with varying degrees of involvement according to media coverage, public opinion and political opportunity.

Humanitarian aid has remained an exceptional activity until crises in Somalia, Ex-Yugoslavia or the Great Lakes have incurred an explosion of costs that made humanitarian aid an activity which needed to be most seriously prepared and monitored. The reason is two-fold : for one because large humanitarian aid operations drain funds from equally important development budgets, and second because the quantity of costs incurred does not guarantee a set level of effectiveness. Unlike development aid, humanitarian aid funding still remains mainly an extra-ordinary activity, allocated on a reactive basis once disaster has struck. As such it is normally not part of the State's regular yearly budget.

2) Health establishes a direct relation between treatment or care, and results obtained. There is a clear causality. Objectives have been met by using specific resources. In this case, external factors have little importance, if any. In humanitarian assistance, such clear causal relation is not possible. A major factor of its operating environment is the prevailing security situation. Should the security situation impede, delay or restrain access to victims as is often the case, results will no doubt be negatively affected by this constraint, over which humanitarian assistance holds little sway. Therefore, no matter how efficient and effective the provision of humanitarian assistance, military and security constraints may limit mobility, access to victims, and even jeopardise humanitarian assistance itself.

As an example in Eastern Zaire in 1997, when the ADFL advance coincided with refugees displacement further inland away from the Rwandan border, UNHCR was able to track and initially assist some refugees (Kinsangani, Tingi-Tingi, Ubundu). However when access was denied by ADFL troops alleging "security reasons" the UNHCR and other NGOs could do nothing but complain. Eventually when access was granted again refugees had disappeared (a large majority had been killed).

In this case the effectiveness of the humanitarian operation was brought to nothing by military decisions. This shows that humanitarian assistance does not hold unchallenged mobility and accessibility to victims, but is equally subject to limitations resulting from the security situation. This important limitation must

[113] Alistair Hallam, op. cit. p. 6.

be kept in mind when analysing the impact of humanitarian assistance.

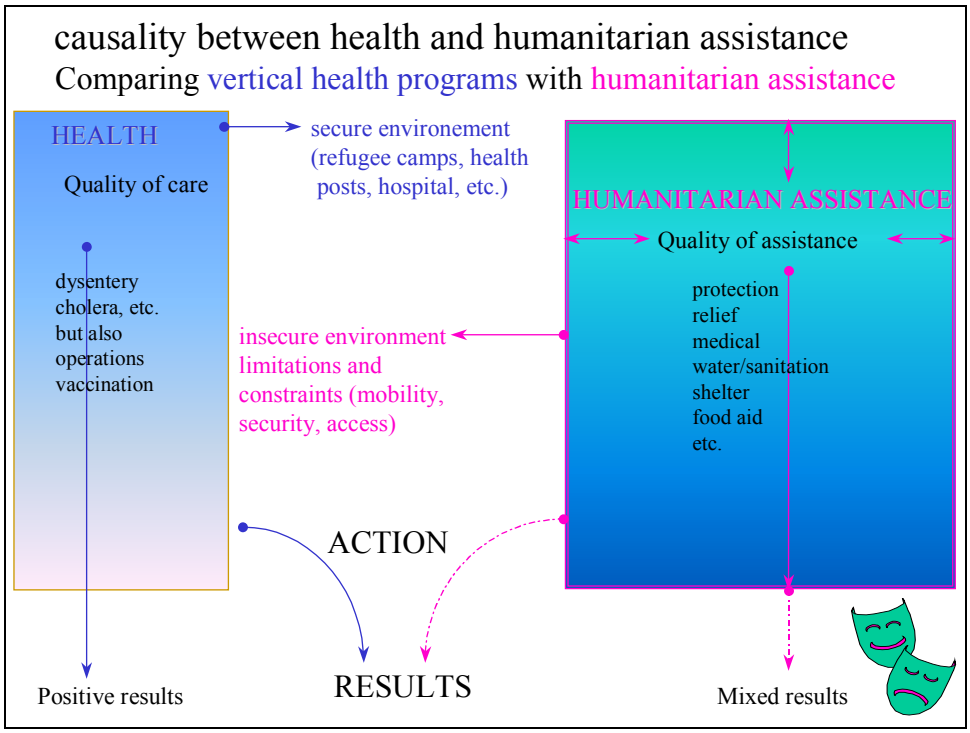
3) Unlike health, humanitarian assistance provides a series of services and goods which cover a wide range of activities, in addition to medical and health care. Whereas health care is "only" concerned with the quality and effectiveness of care, humanitarian assistance must be concerned with the global environment of disaster victims, considering both external and internal constraints.

   Medical assistance is not enough if disaster victims have no access to safe water. Water is insufficient if there is no food available. In some countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia), a warm shelter can become a question of life and death.

   Protection and access to victims are essential conditions if any humanitarian assistance is to be provided at all.

   Humanitarian assistance must therefore coherently co-ordinate its "internal" actions among humanitarian aid organisations working in the field (which can prove a challenge in itself) as well as adequately cover a wide range of context-specific activities in response to needs as opposed to concentrating activities in the health sector only.

3.4. Causality and impact : comparing health and humanitarian assistance



In the best-case scenario, security constraints have a neutral effect on access to victims, whereas in the worse-case scenarios, it may seriously comprise and hamper humanitarian assistance efforts to assist victims, thus also affecting the overall results.

The causality between treatment and result in the health sector is most obvious in high mortality situations, where mortality reduction can be solely attributed to the

intervention (i.e. vertical control programmes to combat diseases)[114]. However even in the health sector that is not necessarily always the case, as mortality reduction may be due to a various activities, none of which might necessarily be sufficient or effective enough to avoid death on its own (i.e. treatment of diarrhoea, often one of the leading causes of death in emergencies, requires a series of measures - patient isolation, clean water provision and oral rehydration therapy, special excreta disposal and special hygiene measures, medical treatment, etc.).

3.5 Disaster preparedness and prevention : comparative advantages for economic evaluation - complementary use of tools

The field of disaster preparedness and prevention (D/P) holds valuable information in terms of economic evaluation of humanitarian aid. Unfortunately the material has largely been overlooked by conflict researchers, perhaps because of the different profiles between D/P researchers and practitioners (mostly earth scientists) and conflict researchers and practitioners.

For years cost-benefit analyses have been used to assess the impact of disasters and its reconstruction costs, as well and to identify the potential economic benefits from the reduction of property destruction and losses in the productive sector (ECLAC, World Bank, IDNDR, IDB, OAS to name a few). In this aspect, economists have played a major role. When costs are considered as cause, economists assess how much vulnerability reduction is rational. In other words, such an analysis allows to recommend a choice between investing today to prevent some future, uncertain event or using resources to produce a certain, needed good.[115] Through use of risk analysis and probability theory (given the uncertainty surrounding disasters), economists have developed sophisticated but useful models to assess the value of reducing vulnerability over time.

Additionally, cost-effectiveness analyses have been undertaken in many specific case studies, demonstrating the usefulness and potential cost-effectiveness of adequate and timely preventive measures when disaster strikes.

Each type of analysis reflects a specific perspective : in case of cost-benefit analysis, the implicit objective is to seek the potentially most efficient economic results, without entering into valuation of intangible elements (human life or suffering, human welfare, etc.), to verify whether the investment is justified.

Cost-effectiveness is used for those projects which are concerned with the saving of lives or with the quality of life. The costs to reinforce hospitals to withstand earthquakes in Mexico is one example[116]; another similar example has to do with retrofitting houses in Turkey to withstand earthquakes (both interns of the cost per saved house and the cost per saved life)[117].

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[114] see two concrete examples in A. Hallam, RRN Good Practice Review No 7, op. cit., box 18 p. 89.
[115] IDNDR/World Bank, Ronald Munasinghe *et al,* "Disaster prevention for sustainable development - Economic and policy issues", 1995, p. 44.
[116] Daniel Bitràn Bitràn, IDNDR consultant, "Inversión en medidas de mitigación en la infraestructura de salud : el caso de Mexico", September 1996
[117] IDNDR/World Bank, Ronald Parker *et al,* "Informal settlements, environmental degradation and disaster vulnerability - the Turkey case study", 1995, p. 91.

Finally while these approaches appear antagonistic at first sight, there are in truth quite complementary. It is just as necessary to obtain a project's global value in economic terms than to appraise its effectiveness on human welfare.

The two approaches thus yield valuable and complementary information if from different angles. Cost-effectiveness analysis in natural disaster requires a comprehensive approach to vulnerability which would provide valuable information were it adapted to conflict situations (considering a similar need to integrate uncertainty factors and vulnerability analysis).

4. What is an evaluation?

Purpose of evaluations

There are several concepts relating to the nature of evaluations. For some evaluation is a process, while for others evaluation is a specific action to be undertaken. At ICRC Dr. Pierre Perrin defines evaluation as "a process which tends to rationally demonstrate the relevance, efficacy, efficiency and impact of actions, in order to improve them or in order to re-orient them".[118] A somewhat older definition from OECD/DAC defines evaluation as "an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability"[119].

Evaluation must answer three basic questions : why evaluate, what to evaluate and how to evaluate it.

4.1 Why evaluate?

There can be three types of motives which justify an evaluation. Often evaluations result from a combination of these three elements :

- Operational reasons

  - to show that objectives have been met (or are being met) and how
  - to evaluate the strategy behind a given programme, project or activity
  - to identify elements likely to be used as a solution to a specific problem
  - to obtain the global appraisal of an operation, including its undesired effects
  - to use the tools allowing to decide upon continuation, reformulation or cessation of an operation

- Institutional reasons

  - build-up in-house technical capacities
  - human resources capacity-building through analysis of evaluation reports
  - institutional memory

- External reasons

  - to facilitate or justify the strategy followed by the organisation in regards to others (donors, U.N. agencies, NGOs, Red Cross, etc.)

[118] Pierre Perrin, "Evaluation des Actions", ICRC, December 1997, p. 1.
[119] DAC, "Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance", OECD, Paris, 1991

- To reply professionally and adequately to external requests
- To contribute to increase links with academic institutions and researchers in order to improve the credibility and quality of work

4.2 What to evaluate?

There are several types of evaluations, which can be divided into four areas :

- Total system evaluation (or global overall evaluation)

- This type of evaluation is the most difficult. It must address all dimensions of humanitarian aid in a country or region where it has taken place. Often undertaken by whole teams of experts, global overall evaluations are seldom done. One example of such an evaluation has been the *Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda*. This multinational, multi-donor evaluation of unprecedented scope was launched by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from 19 OECD-member bilateral donor agencies, the EU, the DAC of the OECD, nine multilateral agencies and UN units, ICRC, IFRC and five international NGOs.[120]

- Operations evaluation (or contract evaluation)

  - These evaluations are essentially project evaluations in accordance with the operations contract signed between the donor and the implementing partner. The evaluation can cover a specific component (i.e. such as reducing vulnerability in flood prone plains, an early warning disaster preparedness project in Central America), or several components (multi-sectoral integrated projects)

- sector evaluation

- This type of evaluation is traditionally used when efficiency problems arise in a given sector of activity (i.e. such as medical, food aid, nutrition, etc.) or for problems only affecting a specific sector. In this case the evaluation focuses exclusively on the activities of said sector.
  This type of evaluation is becoming less common as experience in humanitarian assistance evaluations has increasingly underlined the interdependent relation between the various components of humanitarian aid. Subsequently partial system evaluations carried out by a team of experts should be preferred whenever possible as yielding more comprehensive results.

- Partial system evaluation

  - This evaluation is wider in its scope than sector or operations evaluations. As with global overall evaluations, a team of experts is needed. Partial system evaluations identify a series of issues which require evaluation, often in order to obtain the relevant information and recommend specific solutions or answer policy concerns. This type of evaluation is second to total system evaluation in terms of difficulty and complexity.

[120] For details relating to the participants see :Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, "The international response to conflict and genocide : lessons from the Rwanda experience", Synthesis Report, March 1996, p. 6

4.3 How to evaluate

Evaluation basically fall into three types of categories :

- *Ex ante* evaluation (or initial evaluation or field assessment)

  - This type of evaluation is undertaken prior to the beginning of activities. *It is a fundamental planning tool for the action*. *Ex ante* evaluation is indispensable in order to :
    a) obtain reliable information on the prevailing situation (e.g. assessing the situation, as well as the level and means by which identified needs must be covered, establishing priorities, etc.)
    b) determine the level of locally available resources (often overlooked)
    c) define the general objectives of the operation
    d) determine the strategy and specific objectives to be reached in view of operational constraints
    e) identify the necessary resources for the action (financial, human and material, including logistics)

    A carefully undertaken *ex ante* evaluation sets the basis for a successful operation. It includes the identification of specific *indicators* and an adequate information collection system yielding valuable and reliable data (qualitative as well as quantitative) which may be used subsequently if necessary to adapt or adjust the activities to the unfolding of events. Thus this type of evaluation requires forward planning and provides important tools for subsequent phases of the action (implementation, monitoring, mid-term and *ex post* evaluations).

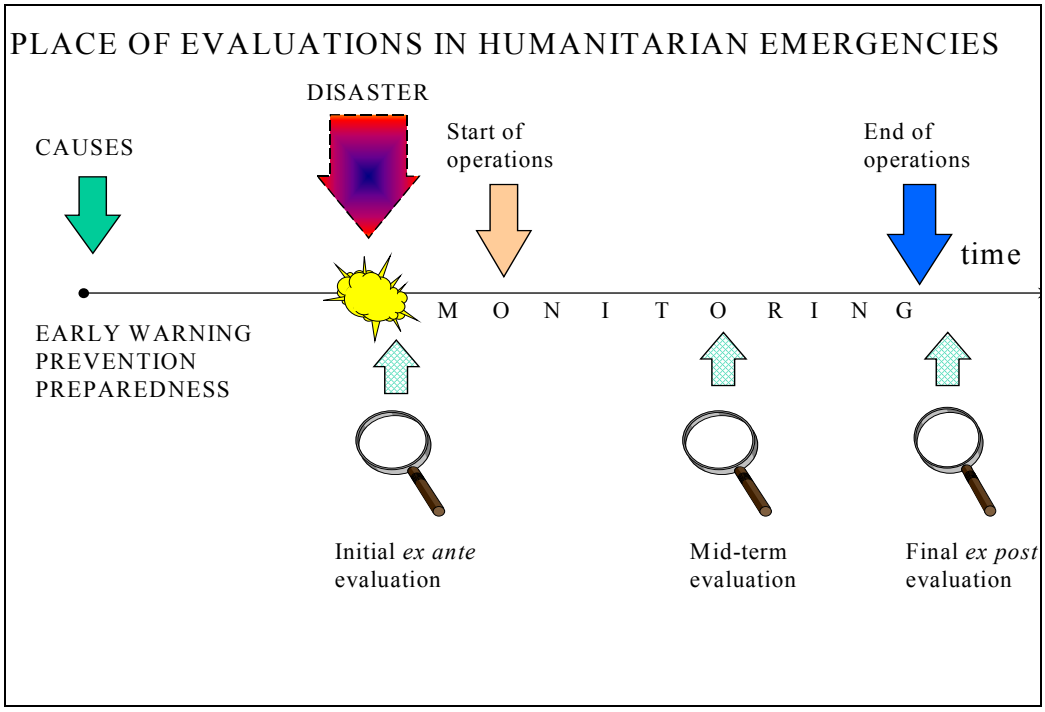
- Mid-term evaluation (or intermediary evaluation)

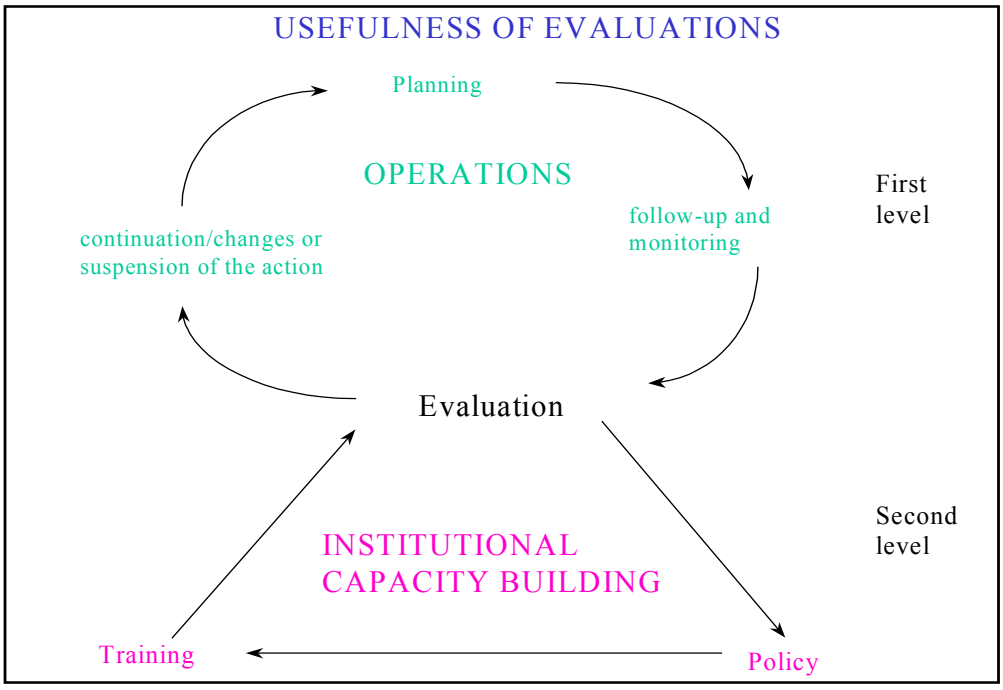
  - This type of evaluation is most often used to monitor the process of implementation of a given operation. As such it deals with achievements to date and recommends adjustments or improvements to meet the initial objectives. The evaluation should use the indicators identified as a result of the *ex ante* evaluation and project plan and compare on-going activities and results to date with the initial objectives.

    Alternatively the prevailing situation may have changed radically, thereby justifying the need for a comprehensive mid-term evaluation. In this case the focus will be more on new objectives and on how the action must be re-directed than on accomplishments. Depending on how the situation may have evolved, the process may be similar to that of a second *ex ante* evaluation.

- *Ex post* evaluation (or final evaluation)

  - This evaluation is undertaken once the action has finalised. It must analyse all the elements of the planning process, and report on the levels of achievement of the action. This evaluation includes retrospective comments on the initial evaluation and the planning for the action, on the mid-term evaluation, on the strategy, objectives, resource use (including financial reporting) and results obtained. The evaluation must be quantitative as well as qualitative. While more comprehensive in its scope than the mid-term evaluation, *ex post* evaluations are used as “lessons learned”. It identifies key elements of success or failure in an operation and should be used to minimise the risks of failure for other operations of similar nature. This type of evaluation is usually carried out by donors as well as implementing partners, but rarely as a joint exercise.





NB. Both figures and points 4.1 and 4.3 have been adapted from the ICRC document “Evaluation des Actions” by Dr. Pierre Perrin.

However evaluations remain a relatively recent activity still subject to some degree of confusion. Not only is the purpose of evaluations often misunderstood, but even among donors there has been some confusion in the typology of evaluations. As an example, the 1995 ECHO operational manual for the evaluation of humanitarian aid lists ten “types of evaluations” mixing evaluation methodology and evaluation

objectives[121]. In any case, evaluations are only one component of donor's decision making process. The same as government decisions are never taken only on the basis of technical expertise, donor decisions on humanitarian aid funding and development funding do not necessarily always reflect the conclusions of evaluations

4.4 Levels of analysis in evaluation

In evaluations analysis can be applied at many different levels :

- Effectiveness analysis

  - Seeks to determine the level of effectiveness (measure of progress) obtained for a given objective (outcome analysis)

- Efficiency analysis

  - Seeks to determine the adequacy and quality with which resources have been used to obtain a given objective (output analysis)

- Impact analysis

  - Similar to effectiveness analysis, but more detailed since the analysis is not limited to the objectives but includes a valuation of indirect and/or secondary effects. For example if effectiveness of a food aid can be determined by under nutrition and malnutrition, impact analysis will equally consider the effects of food aid on the local market and its consequences.

- Sustainability analysis

  - Seeks to determine the level of self-sufficiency of an action or activity. Will it be able to continue without external support, i.e. when humanitarian aid ceases? (particularly concerned with *financial* sustainability)

- Relevance analysis

  - Seeks to assess if objectives were fixed in accordance with needs, problems, constraints and priorities identified. It is the orientation of the action which is analysed. It can also be used to compare the situation with the specific mandate of an organisation.

- Basic narrative analysis

  - More concerned with a description of events and a summary of activities, it does not yield results on effectiveness or impact of operations. However it may serve to identify issues which require further in-depth evaluation

- Compliance analysis

[121] ECHO Operational Manual for the evaluation of humanitarian aid, chapter 3. The list of ECHO evaluation typology is the following :Ex-ante evaluation, monitoring/on-going evaluation, interim operation evaluation, ex-post operation evaluation, country programme evaluation, sector evaluation, thematic evaluation, evaluation of aid instruments, joint donor evaluation and evaluation of disaster prevention and preparedness activities.

- Essentially concerned with the level of compliance to the procedures set by the organisation (management, finance or others).

Three complementary sub-criteria for analysis are increasingly being used :

- Connectedness

- refers to the need "to assure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context which takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account" (Minear, 1994)[122]. In other words, it is a clear recognition that humanitarian aid must also ensure sustainability of its actions.

- Coherence analysis

  - Seeks to determine the coherence of the action between the various activities undertaken, as well as the coherence in the choice of strategic orientations taken by the organisation. It refers to the need to ensure that "the activities of the international community are carried out with an effective division of labour among actors, maximising the comparative advantages of each" (Minear, 1994)[123]

- Coverage

  - Refers to the need "to reach major population groups facing life-threatening suffering wherever they are, providing them with assistance and protection proportionate to their need and devoid of extraneous political agendas" (Minear, 1994)[124]

These are but a series of possible methods to analyse humanitarian assistance. The use of each type of analysis is decided according to the type of objective sought.

5. Using indicators in evaluation

It is important to recall that indicators are merely a means to an end. As such, indicators are subject to a number of limitations, namely :

1. That indicators are only a tool - their use represents only a small fraction of the success of any project. "At the end of the day, it is not indicators, but good practice by quality, motivated staff that improves emergency aid…".[125]

2. That indicators can be most valuable when applied to measurable aspects which can be anticipated. Unfortunately, that is not always the case in emergencies.

3. Too much emphasis on indicators without an awareness of their limits is potentially dangerous by leading to superficial and distorted vision of emergency needs.

But despite limitations, the use of indicators also has a positive side.

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[122] A. Hallam and J. Borton, draft document "Good practice in the evaluation of humanitarian assistance in response to complex emergencies : guidance for evaluation managers", ODI, London, 1998, point 3.3, and A. Hallam, Good Practice Review No 7, op. cit., p. 53-55.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] J. Telford and J. Eijkenaar, "Applying indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of ECHO-funded emergency humanitarian aid projects", draft two, 10.7.98.

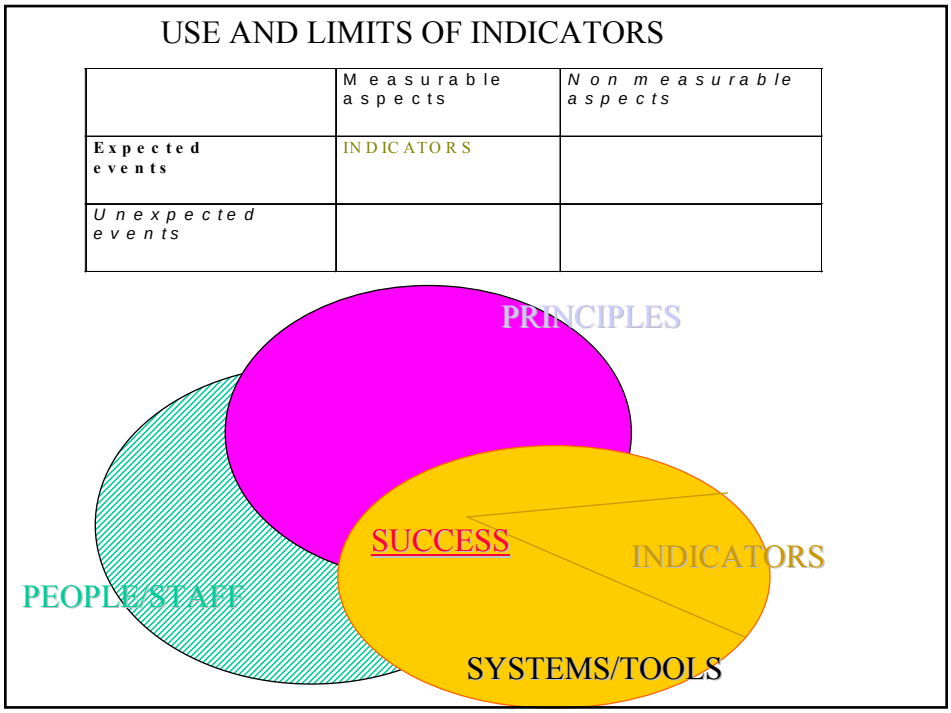
1. It obliges to formulate key questions from the start, such as : what can be achieved exactly, at what cost, by when, etc.. Thus the use of indicators requires a targeted and selected approach to humanitarian aid.

2. It encourages a collaborative design process, resulting in a clear intent and expectation for all concerned, which in turn requires an agreement on the indicators.

3. It obliges the recording of the design process (indicator matrix and basic assumptions). This serves for subsequent evaluations in that it sets the perspective, parameters and logic from which the project was formulated.

4. It serves as a tool for project management during monitoring and evaluation.[126]

Use and limits of indicators can be represented as follows :



Many different types of indicators exist : some are meant to evaluate resources (often named “input” indicators), some are meant to evaluate activities (“output” indicators), some others measure the volume of activities, the quality of activities, coverage of activities, etc.. Some indicators are designed to evaluate specific objectives, some others general objectives, yet others strategic choices. But more important is the *quality* of indicators.

According to some, all indicators should be **SMART**, meaning that they must be

[126] Ibid. All comments on benefits and limitation of indicators are from the above mentioned report, including the following two figures.

Specific : the objective should be as precisely designed as possible
Measurable : quantitatively or qualitatively
Achievable : the objective should be realistically attainable, not necessarily easily
Relevant : the specific objective should relate to the general objective
Time-bound : obtained within a given time-frame[127]

Similarly USAID/OFDA presents strong performance indicators as those possessing the following characteristics [128]:

- measurable (quantitatively and/or qualitatively)
- they are the result of direct measure and are sensitive to change
- credible and familiar
- practical, reliable and replicable
- unidimensional (not the result of a combination of results)
- reportable on a regular basis
- cost-effective
- useful

This book is primarily concerned with overall **cost** and **effectiveness indicators,** the emphasis being placed on overall outcome effectiveness of humanitarian aid. But one must not mistake *criteria* with *indicators*. Mortality is an evaluation criteria, whereas crude mortality rate is an evaluation indicator. Costs alone are criteria, but costs related to the beneficiary caseload or related to the use of human resources, of material resources, or of projects, become an indicator (average cost per person assisted, cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility, etc.)

As mentioned previously **mortality** has been suggested as an overall effectiveness indicator (or outcome indicator), both at global level and possibly at operations contract level (output indicator), thereby supporting the view that "It is perhaps important to note that the *overall standard* by which humanitarian assistance must be judged is *effectiveness in saving lives*".[129]

Given the stated priority in emergencies to "save and preserve lives", the single criterion best suited to identify effectiveness is mortality. Indeed, it is also the only criterion which may be used to compare between different activities. Mortality is, in mathematical terms, the smallest common denominator. It can be expressed as an indicator in a number of ways : crude mortality rate (number of deaths per ten thousand per day), crude death rate (annual number of deaths per thousand population), death toll (number of deaths), age-specific mortality rate, gender-specific mortality rate, case-specific mortality, etc.

While mortality indicators are only sensitive to extreme changes (death), it can be argued that ultimately failure to provide protection to beneficiaries will result in higher mortality, the same as failure to provide food aid and relief to beneficiaries, or failure to provide them with medical assistance. Death can be caused by a variety of factor (violent deaths from aggression or killings, death as a result of starvation or malnutrition, death from dehydration, death from adverse weather conditions -cold or heat-, death from lack of medical attention, etc.), but the result is the same even if the cause is different.

[127] ICRC "Planning for Results", draft document, July 1998
[128] USAID/BHR "Field verification of performance indicators, participant handbook", November 1997
[129] DAC, op. cit., General Criteria point 21, p. 10.

It is important to remember that mortality is an outcome indicator, looking at overall effectiveness. However a number of different activities might be covered by an operations contract (between the donor and an NGO). Thus sector-specific indicators must be identified against which performance may be evaluated (output indicators). Because these indicators are sector-specific, they must be indicated by the implementing partners themselves, ideally with inputs from beneficiaries themselves (participatory evaluation methods). They are part of the strategic planning undertaken during a project formulation, as the result of the initial evaluation.

6. Presentation of the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA)

This approach is increasingly being used by donors and implementing agencies alike for project formulation. The advantage of this method is that it requires adequate forward planning which will turn into more efficient and effective project implementation (e.g. by having identified before hand clear goals, purpose, outputs and indicators and their articulation).

Because the log frame worksheet presents a project development hypothesis and facilitates the analysis of the project design, a brief, simplified presentation of its use will be made.[130]

The log frame worksheet is divided into four horizontal rows: Goal, Purpose, Outputs, and Inputs; and four columns: Narrative, Objectively Identifiable Indicators, Means of Verification, and Assumptions (see figure below). The four rows constitute a hierarchy of accomplishment, in which achievements within the categories toward the bottom contribute to achievements within the categories toward the top. The four columns represent descriptions and conditions associated with the project goal, purpose, outputs, and inputs. Each of these categories is discussed below.

Goal - Narrative Summary
The goal is the aim or end toward which the project purpose is directed. A goal may be a condition or a problem to be addressed. An entire program may be directed toward the achievement of the goal. Generally, a goal is not achieved by one project alone, but is the end toward which a variety of projects (and non-project activities) are aimed (such as reducing the mortality in humanitarian emergencies). The project goal is the end to be achieved, and the project purpose is the means by which to reach that end or the benefit of the project.

Purpose - Narrative Summary
The purpose is the overall objective which the project is designed to achieve. The achievement of the purpose should contribute directly to the achievement of the goal. For instance, a project purpose could be to reduce malnutrition, while the goal may be to reduce mortality in humanitarian emergencies.

Output Activities - Narrative Summary
Project outputs are produced by means of the project inputs. The outputs may be quantitative, such as number of malnourished children who have recovered; qualitative, such as the current nutritional status of the children admitted. Project activities (e.g. nutritional therapy, medical care) are components of the outputs,

[130] presented by MetaMetrics, 1996, http:/www.metametrics.com/logframe.html

though it is the specific end results (number of recovered children) which are properly termed outputs.

Inputs - Narrative Summary
Inputs are the materials and resources available to produce the project outputs. Inputs include personnel, equipment, training, facilities, technical assistance, funds for contracted services, and other items.

Objectively Verifiable Indicators
An indicator is a sign or index which expresses a level of achievement within each of the four rows (goal, purpose, outputs, and inputs) of the log frame matrix. An indicator, as a measurable unit, facilitates assessments of project performance and/or results.

Means of Verification - evaluation methods and levels of analysis
The means of verification are the kind of evaluation methods which build on the indicators as well as the type of analysis conducted.

Assumptions
The assumptions are the identified significant external factors or conditions which are essential to successful project implementation. The assumptions refer to conditions or constraints over which the project personnel have no control (i.e. security situation). There are normally different assumptions for each level of the project.

EXAMPLE OF ADAPTED LOG FRAME TO HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

Planning	Narrative	Indicators objectively verifiable	Means of verification (evaluation methods)	Assumptions
Goal (overall results)	reduced mortality	Crude mortality rate Death toll Death rate	effectiveness (global level)	data available
Purpose (project outcome)	reduce malnutrition	Number of recovered children (supplied by implementing partner)	effectiveness (operations contract level)	external conditions necessary
Activities (outputs)	nutritional therapy medical care	to be identified by implementing partner	efficiency (performance)	factors of influence
Resources (inputs)	human, material and financial	to be identified by implementing partner	efficiency (performance)	factors of influence

A word of caution from the World Bank[131]

[131] World Bank "Performance monitoring indicators : a handbook for task managers", 1996, chapter : Good practice in monitoring and evaluation, http://www.worldbank.org/html/opr/pmi/maintx23.html

"In the end performance monitoring indicators and the feedback they provide are only as good as the underlying analysis (economic and financial analysis, economic and sector work, social and environmental assessment) supporting the project design, and the data to be assessed over time. The logical framework approach to project formulation is only a structure for project design and evaluation, not the full extent of project design or evaluation. None of the tools described … can replace sound economic, financial, social, environmental, and risk and sensitivity analysis **or comprehensive monitoring and evaluation**. Together, the analysis, the logical framework, and the indicators form a system for continuous analysis and a holistic approach to project design, monitoring, and evaluation."

While LFA allows to see the strategy and patterns of thought behind a project design, it is also subject to a number of reservations, chief among which :

a) rigidity of the process, which makes it unsuitable in humanitarian emergencies where conditions can change rapidly, thereby requiring a quick adaptation of program activities;
b) confusion between the meaning of some of the terms;
c) links and causality between elements may be difficult to prove;
d) insufficient seriousness given to the assumptions;
e) environment of the LFA is controlled and manageable, when the opposite is generally true in humanitarian aid.[132]

7. A final look at cost considerations : an overview of the value[133] of human life

If the essential objective of humanitarian assistance is to save lives, and that funding is often only a secondary constraint, the value of a human life is priceless and above any other consideration. Each individual human life is unique. Therefore each human life should intrinsically possess the same value, totally invaluable in its sentimental component. In other words and outside triage in emergency operations, humanitarian assistance should make no distinction among people in need. The value of human life is thus theoretically equal for all, without discrimination. This meets the spirit of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[134]

From the perspective of humanitarian assistance, it could be said that there is "equal duty assistance" towards each of the affected people. As a consequence, it should be possible to calculate costs based on an "assisted person" concept. This concept does not look at the specific type of assistance required by each individual. It matters little whether the person has received medical attention or food aid, clothing or any other form of assistance. What matters is that the individual has been assisted. The two underlying assumptions are : 1) that humanitarian assistance is given in response to *needs*. Therefore assistance, no matter its nature, is fully justified. 2) that said assistance contributes directly or indirectly to life-saving or essential life-preserving activities.

This enables to avoid the difficult and unsolved debate over the value of human life. Some examples are given hereunder to illustrate the difficulty of calculating the value of human life.

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[132] A. Hallam, GPR No 7, op. cit. P. 108.
[133] "value" is here freely used as a synonym of "cost", although each term refers to a particular system.
[134] Adopted on 10 December 1948 by the U.N. General Assembly. In particular articles 1 to 3.

Value of human life as seen from the state

The cost of human life has always been a difficult issue for economists. Taking an example from continental Europe, in France it would seem that such a concept was introduced as recently as 1953 during a study on profitability of road investments.[135] Although conditions are very different from a humanitarian assistance environment, it is nonetheless useful to see how the problem was dealt with.

In case of road safety investment, finance is a primary constraint, since the objective is not to spend everything to the last penny in order to avoid any deaths on the road. As such the logic is to distribute as best as possible a financial package in order to avoid the highest number of deaths (or accidents), which is a way of setting a spending limit, or so-called agreed cost of the dead, in order to avoid an additional death.[136]

In this analysis, evaluation of human loss for society is the sum of three elements : a production loss, fruit of the dead person's potential future work, a sentimental loss for the family, and a *praetium vivendi* of an arbitrary amount.[137] The result obtained was an average value per avoided death of 145 000 Francs in 1957, re-evaluated to 240,000 F in 1970.[138]

Health is obviously a key sector where the problem of human life is of concern.
The simplest case is that which identifies how much must be spent to save a life given a specific illness. However things quickly become more complex when one tries to treat various health issues at the lowest possible cost. A study undertaken in the United States (1968-1972) compared for example the cost of a life saved thanks to security belt use (US$ 87,00 et thus prime choice in the ranking) with that of rectum cancer (US$ 42.900 and ranked previous to last).[139] Logic would indicate that security belt is preferable, being almost 500 times as cost-effective! Does this mean that rectum cancer patients should be abandoned, their treatment being too expensive and not cost-effective?
Obviously these studies immediately sparked strong criticism and resistance, often on moral and psychological grounds. At the same there are many limits to this type of comparison : absence of valuation of indirect effects, same economic weight given to each individual regardless of category (children, elderly, women, etc.), impossibility to classify non-lethal illnesses (i.e. arthritis, ranking last), etc.

Another author cynically presents the economic cost curb of human life : before an age *x* (around 20 years of age) and past an age *y* (shortly after 80) individual costs are higher than returns. Rationally not a penny should be spent to save the lives of people in these two categories….[140]

Difference between theory and practice is blatant : in theory, all men are equal. But value of human life in practice varies greatly according to sectors of economic analysis. For example, public spending on safety shows tremendous differences between air and bicycle transportation. According to A. Jacquard, "the passenger of a plane is much less subject to risk, per distance unit traveled, than a cyclist in the streets of Paris. Airplanes construction and air transport companies have accepted

[135] Patrick Jeanjean, collection Que Sais-je?, "Le Calcul Economique", PUF, 1975, p. 81.
[136] Ibid., p. 81.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] H. Levy-Lambert et H. Guillaume, "La rationalisation des choix budgétaires", PUF, 1971, p. 172/3.
[140] A. Jacquard, "J'accuse l'économie triomphante", Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1995, p. 144-146.

to pay a high price for reliability of their transport means and installations; cyclists only may look after themselves. It appears thus that as investment choices go the value of a plane passenger is much higher than that of a cyclist. Overall number of lethal accidents would have been much lower if human life values had been considered as equal in both cases : accepted savings on air transportation would have freed credits in order to generalize cycling bands."[141]

So without having to go to developing countries, it appears that the state values our lives quite differently according to the situation. As seen from the state, the value of a human life is highly context specific. The same as in conflicts.

These examples apply obviously to industrialized and developed countries. Incidentally, an essential difference with countries where humanitarian operations are taking place is that *the approach used in industrialized countries follows the least-cost combination method, given budgetary constraints, whereas humanitarian assistance aims at the highest possible effectiveness, costs in emergency only representing a secondary constraint given the priceless value of life-saving humanitarian activities*.

In conflict-prone and disaster-prone developing countries such as Somalia, Rwanda, or Burundi, the problem of human life value is expressed in very different terms than those used in the studies in France or the United States. For the industrialized countries, an essential tool to value human life is based on expected individual production returns, whereas these African nations do not possess an economic structure which allows for such an approach to be used. Namely, low monetization of the economy (barter and in-kind trading) and a large informal sector makes it difficult to use traditional economic analysis. (As an example, only 8% of Burundi's active population was making a living in the formal sector in 1991.[142] In these conditions it makes little sense to try to assess expected individual production returns.)

When comparing public spending in percentage of GDP for both categories of countries, one finds that unsurprisingly there is no public investment spending for road security in Somalia, Rwanda or Burundi. For health spending, the figures were as follow (total percentage of health spending as related to GDP) :[143]

		year			year
Somalia	1,5%	(1990)	France	9,1%	(1991)
Burundi	3,3%	(1990)	USA	13,3%	(1991)
Rwanda	3,5%	(1990)			

A factor which might explain different standards between rich and poor countries has to do with a basic economic rule. Scarcity is expensive, abundance is cheap. If one compares population growth rate and fertility rate[144] between most developed countries (average 0.8% from 1960 to 1994, projected 0.4% from 1994 to 2000. Fertility 1.7) with that of least developed countries (average 2.5% 1960-1994, projected 2.5% 1994-2000. Fertility 5.3), it can be argued that abundance of births in developing countries comparatively makes life less valuable. In fact, demographic data and high population density in Rwanda have even been used to explain the 1994 genocide.

[141] A. Jacquard, op. cit. p. 143-144.
[142] République du Burundi, Conseil Economique et Social, "Etude et Analyse des Problèmes du Développement, Rapport Général", Bujumbura, novembre 1991, p. 2.
[143] 1994 Human Development Report, op. cit., table p. 177 for Africa and p. 203 for France and USA.
[144] 1997 Human Development Report, op. cit., p. 195 and 218.

Another difference is that developed nations tend to have greater social cohesion. In industrialized countries society has traditionally not been as clearly historically fragmented as in Somalia, Rwanda or Burundi (although there are exceptions, such as the ex-Yugoslavia). But in a fragmented society, human life value of an opposing group (different clan, ethnic group, religious group, etc.) can even have a negative value. In extreme cases taking an enemy's life can be a laudable action.

So in practice value of human life is both culture and context specific. This brings an added difficulty to humanitarian assistance which follows a unique standard for human lives, when its operating environment may retain different if not opposing values.

Value of human life in the private sector : life-insurance coverage

Insurance is another sector where human life needs to be valued. Coverage depends on risks (age, occupation, health history, sports practiced and all other relevant information), benefits and premium.

In a given country and for the same premium, a young healthy woman should be able to obtain greater benefits than a middle-age smoking man, simply because risks of death for the second individual are greater. So insurance does make a distinction between individuals, and the value (as expressed by benefits) of a human life varies from case to case.
In practice benefits can be fixed according to the customer's risk exposure and premium. Higher risks can be compensated by higher premium payment, so that coverage depends on the individual's ability to pay.

Among risks, one of the factor is the country of residence. In 1996 I requested from a company some quotes on individual all risks (including war and civil strife) insurance coverage (life, disability and accidents) with two separate options : the first option, as permanent resident of a European Community country, the second, as permanent resident in Somalia, Rwanda or Burundi.
In the first case I had no problem obtaining insurance coverage for close to US$ 300,00 (or 1,500,000 French Francs) through an insurance broker in Paris, the risks being assumed by Lloyds of London against premium payments. But in the second I could not obtain coverage if I decided to spend the rest of my days in Somalia, Rwanda or Burundi. At best I was offered temporary coverage in case of "frequent and regular trips to high risk countries" [145].

This quick look at the different sectors which deal with the issue of human life value seems to demonstrate that there does not seem to be a unique standard against which a life's measurement can be done, but rather a multitude of different options. As a result valuation of human life still remains a debated issue.

[145] Individual accident insurance policy proposal of 17.4.96 made by Aquila Consultants, Paris.

CHAPTER FIVE.
Current trends of humanitarian aid from the response to hurricane Mitch in Central America in October 1998 and NATO offensive against Serbia in March 1999. The ambiguous role of disaster prevention and perverse dynamics of aid.

A. hurricane Mitch in Central America

During the last week of October 1998 hurricane Mitch caused widespread destruction and killed thousands of people in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize and Costa Rica. The magnitude of destruction and damage caused by hurricane Mitch is unlike any other disaster having affected this region. According to initial United Nations estimates, more than 6 million people were affected by the hurricane in no less than six countries, and the dead count rose up to almost 20,000 (both dead and missing). Unlike earthquakes which regularly have struck the region (Managua 1972, Mexico 1982, Guatemala 1986, Arnero 1998), hurricanes travel across large distances, which explains that so many countries were affected by a single natural hazard.

In absolute terms the largest natural disaster in 1998 were the torrential rains and flooding in China in 1998, which reportedly affected more than 180 million people and caused over 30 billion us dollars of damage, despite a remarkably low death toll of 4,150[146]. However response in China was managed mostly with internal means, through mobilization of all available resources (military and civilian)[147] in order to contain flooding, and valuable if limited external assistance. At the request of the Chinese Government, the United Nations launched an inter-agency appeal in September 1998 for a total of 139 million us dollars. Only a fraction (14%) as compared to the relief fund of 1 billion us dollars from China's central government.[148] As such despite the incredible number of people affected and the extent of damages it did not make headlines news in Spain for more than a day.

On the contrary in the case of hurricane Mitch and despite comparatively lower damages both in the number of people affected and the level of economic losses the limited capacity of the countries to cope with the disaster prompted a complete information coverage by the media and a generous response from donors. In some European countries such as Spain, post Mitch disaster information was regularly given on television and in the media until the NATO attacked Serbia in March 1999 and became the unrivaled news event.
The United Nations inter-agency transitional appeal launched in December 1998 for the Mitch affected countries amounted to 153 million us dollars for a period of six months. Slightly more than the appeal for China, even though the number of affected people in Mitch countries were some 27 times less (6.7 million versus 180 million) and the economic damages six times smaller (5.3 billions us dollars[149] versus some 30 billion us dollars as mentioned previously for China). Again the limited capacity of Mitch affected countries to cope with disaster can explain the greater attention and means received, as highlighted by a death toll more than four-fold that of China

[146] Figures drawn from the document "1998 Flood Disaster and Actions in China", S. Peijun, Z. Wuguang, IRS, Beijing Normal University, as part of materials from IDNDR Chinese delegation presented at the Geneva Forum, July 5-9, 1999, Geneva, p. 3
[147] ibid, according to the same document p. 4-5 more than 360,000 military and police forces were fighting against the floods which at their peak in August had more than 8 million people involved in anti-flood fights, with an equally impressive display of material means.
[148] Ibid., p. 11.
[149] joint UNDP/ECLAC document "A preliminary assessment of damages caused by hurricane "Mitch", revision 2 of 10.12.98, p. 3

(18,174 people dead and missing[150] compared to 4,150) despite a much smaller size of affected population and geographical extension of the disaster.

But hurricane Mitch has also brought to light recent trends in disaster response which will likely continue and increase in the future. One trend is the marginalization of the United Nations system and the increasing weight of bilateral assistance. Another aspect, also related to the shifting perception on the usefulness of United Nations involvement in disasters, is the type of assistance being given, and the so-called "window of opportunity" that disasters open.

Traditional response mechanisms to disasters :
When a (natural or man-made) disaster strikes a country, the government officially requests external assistance to the international donor community through the United Nations. The Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), previously the DHA (Department for Humanitarian Affairs) prepares on the basis of an inter-institutional ground assessment an initial appeal to donors which states the program and project funding needs in order to respond to the disaster and provide assistance. The document is traditionally labeled "United Nations Inter-Agency appeal" and normally only covers the needs as identified for programs and projects implemented by the United Nations, but not including the needs and programs of NGOs or the Red Cross. Because appeals are the main instrument to collect funds for United Nations, time is of the essence. Therefore rough estimations normally apply in initial appeals, the main goal of which is to obtain initial funding to start activities and not to give an precise and scientific description of project implementation.

In addition to the United Nations appeal, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement also have their own funding procedures, and their involvement is not necessarily related to United Nations involvement. Both the ICRC and the IFRC also launch appeals to obtain funding from donors. Other means of fund raising among NGOs are request for funds from the general public on television, in magazines and newspapers among other public campaigns. In Spain a number of companies have recently decided to allocate a small percentage of their sales volume to NGOs, as a means to improve their image.[151]
The media play an essential role both in terms of fomenting public awareness to a disaster and its consequences and concomitantly in ensuring response to a disaster through calls for donations.

While the vast majority of funds given to United Nations essentially emanate from governments, funding for NGHAs and NGOs are a mix of government support, the organization's own funds and private donations, the proportion of which may vary significantly from one case to another. As an example in the case of hurricane Mitch, the percentage of funds that the Spanish Red Cross received from the public (i.e. private individuals and private companies) for assistance to the affected countries represented more than 90% of the total amount of funds received! This is quite an unusual and spectacular figure which commends the generosity and solidarity of the Spanish people with their Central American fellows

While neither trend sprung as a result of Mitch, international response has in this case largely by-passed the United Nations system. If as previously mentioned the

[150] Ibid., p. 1
[151] For example the cigarette brand "Fortuna" gives 0.7% of sales volume to NGOs, in line with the 0.7% GDP aid spending budget that NGOs are requesting the government to adopt.

UN Inter-agency transitional appeal amounted to some 153 million us dollars for short-term emergency and rehabilitation, the bulk of aid was essentially channeled bilaterally and through NGOs. Spain played a major role in the disaster response, but more specifically its civil society. Given language, historical and cultural proximity with the Central American countries the response was overwhelming. As an example, the Spanish Red Cross had received at the end of January 99 almost 42 million us dollars for 139 projects in the region[152], as compared to 51 million dollars for the whole of the UN system[153]…It is highly significant to note the low response through the multilateral UN system (most contributions to the United Nations emanate from governments), whereas in the case of the Spanish Red Cross more than 90 percent of is financing was received from private donations. And this is but one of the non-governmental agencies which participated actively to disaster response in the region. If one were to include all of the Red Cross societies (French, American, Canadian, UK, Dutch, Belgian, German, in addition to the Secretariat of the International Red Cross Federation, which channels donations from other Red Cross societies and launch their own appeal, the International Committee of the Red Cross, etc.) the amount received for disaster assistance to Mitch countries is likely greater than that of the United Nations appeal[154].

This marks a notorious difference with other recent disasters. For example in appeals for the Great Lakes following the Rwanda crisis in 1994, total contributions for 1994 and 1995 amounted to some 1,971 million us dollars, of which 1,236 million through the UN system, the rest being channeled bilaterally through NGOs and the Red Cross[155]. While it is somewhat unfair to compare these two very different scenarios[156], differences between man-made and natural disasters are not sufficient to explain why more than 62% of donations which were made through the UN system during the Rwanda crisis have fallen to unprecedented lows in Mitch disaster response. OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), previously DHA (Department of Humanitarian Affairs) has been mostly invisible in the Mitch affected countries except for a few missions from its New York base, without any permanent structure for coordination of activities or incapacity in taking a regional leading role in disaster response, unlike during the Rwanda crisis in which UNREO was created as a spearhead of United Nations response, initially providing valuable information and coordination services within Rwanda while UNHCR had the regional mandate for the refugee population.

The same task and responsibility of responding to disasters and coordination of humanitarian assistance rests upon the United Nations in both cases, even if through different channels.

The crisis of the United Nations

[152] Information from internet, "http://www.cruzroja.es/mitch/plan.htm"
[153] see OCHA situation report No 16 of January 22, 1999, point 3 "overall country figures".
[154] While the Spanish Red Cross is essentially the largest Red Cross donor for Mitch countries, other Red Cross contributions are quite significant in volume, amounting to several millions of us dollars. The IFRC secretariat alone launched two appeals totalling 44.535 million Swiss francs (28 million US$) and budgets from other Red Cross participating societies operating in the region must be added.
[155] UNDHA Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal in Rwanda, Jan-Dec. 1995, vol. III, p. 25 for 1994, and UNDHA Great Lakes consolidated fund-raising document, Jan-Dec. 1996, p. 205-206 for 1995 figures. For more information see the Burundi case study presented as annex.
[156] the Rwanda crisis had a very large refugee caseload of more than four million refugees at its peak under UNHCR responsibility and a focus of assistance on protection and emergency, quite different from the structure of disaster response in case of a natural disasters.

But what is at stake is more than the capacity for disaster response. The crisis that the UN has been undergoing in the past few years is much deeper, worse, and essentially political in nature. It is linked to how the UN system was established and is operated. In its current structure the real center of power and decision making is the so-called UN Security Council. Its five permanent members, each with power of veto, are the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia (previously the USSR).

Not all five members hold the same views or attitudes. China, the world's most populous country, maintains a low profile in international relations, its attention more focused on managing domestic matters. When Russia belonged to the USSR during the cold war, the right of veto made it extremely difficult for the UN to be able to act with the consensus of its security council members. Now that Russia has become an "ally" of the West, or more adequately said, having become dependent on Western capital and international finance to avoid an open bankruptcy in the country, little opposition to the Western bloc remains. Or at least none which has so far not been arranged by economic and financial agreements.

Among the three remaining western countries, two have strong historical and cultural links : United States and Britain have always been each other's closest allies, but the balance of power has since the beginning of the century shifted in favor of the United States as the most powerful of the two. Still, in foreign policy decisions, both the United States and Britain have an unrivaled mutual understanding. Finally, while France has been a member of the western alliance alongside Britain and the US as NATO member, its different culture and history has turned it into an uneasy partner of the English speaking members.
As regards to the influence of each of these countries in geopolitical terms, the only remaining superpower on all accounts is the United States. Among the three western countries, the decade of the 1990s has seen the erosion of French influence worldwide, especially in Africa (the Great Lakes crisis has been described as a battleground of western influence, in which English speakers actually took power over previously French speaking governments, as in Rwanda). France lost influence not only in the Great Lakes, but also amidst the United Nations, as the election of a new Secretary General showed.

In short the United Nations have been used by the members of the Security Council to implement their own policies. Actually the only country with the means and will to continue doing so is the United States, which essentially runs the United Nations system.
If in 1991 a broad consensus was established around the Gulf war against Iraq and the need for the Security Council's approval before the offensive could be launched, the increasing arrogance of the last remaining superpower has showed that controlling the United Nations system was not enough. Too many limitations and the need for a consensus among Security Council members proved too great a difficulty for undertaking US led-actions. At the turn of the century, the 1999 spring offensive launched by NATO on Serbia showed the new face of world geopolitics. The United Nations Security Council had been by-passed and military actions undertaken without UN consent. Since peace keeping operations in the ex-Yugoslavia (1995 - UNPROFOR), in Somalia (1991 - UNSOSOM), in Rwanda (1994 - UNAMIR) initially showed the weaknesses and limitations of UN led operations, other military and defense organizations such as NATO have gradually taken over UN operations. In the ex-Yugoslavia UNPROFOR became IFOR, later SFOR. In Spring 1999 the offensive against Serbia was directly led by NATO under US command, as a means to maintain total control of operations and to avoid any potential loss of sovereignty

or decision making power. The NATO Secretary General may be Spanish (Javier Solana) and civilian for looks but military command is firmly in the hands of the United States.

In the midst of fundamental issues of world geopolitics and control of international institutions, the problems of UN disaster response capacity may seem secondary.
It is difficult to explain whether the UN system's general passiveness in the light of Mitch (with exception of some of its agencies, such as PAHO) is the result of declining public confidence in the UN system or whether it is the lack of donor support which is responsible for decaying services. In any case, the United Nations has yet to undertake a much needed internal criticism and adequate restructuring of its services to bring them to level with the heavy responsibilities they are supposed to be able to assume. And this in turn may only be possible through a complete restructuring of a system with an obsolete structure inherited from World War II which no longer reflects the needs and challenges ahead. Starting with a radical change in the number of members and the composition of the UN Security Council.

But the crisis of the UN system does not reduce or minimize the needs for disaster response. In response to disaster reduction at the end of the eighties a new member of the UN family was created : the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (or IDNDR), as a means to foment and disseminate disaster prevention and preparedness. Despite its limitations (not including technological and chemical disasters, not including conflict situations) the IDNDR has contributed to increased awareness among decision makers and politicians on the need for disaster reduction. Even international awards have been given to outstanding programs (UN Sasakawa Disaster Prevention Award). Through the creation of 135 national IDNDR committees worldwide[157], scientific research has led to a dramatic improvement of disaster response capacity and knowledge on causes and effects of natural disasters. Achievements range from expanded capacity to forecast disasters using state of the art technology to on the ground community awareness training (evacuation, first aid, shelter construction, etc.). Another important aspect has been to give greater attention to building and infrastructure resilience in case of disasters. Hospitals and schools, in addition to housing, have been the object of many improvements to better withstand natural hazards. Social scientists (anthropologists, sociologist, psychologists) and earth scientists (engineers, geologists, seismologists, meteorologist, etc.) have worked intensively to better understand why and how disasters occur. Other programs with a direct impact on human vulnerability have been the so-called "early warning systems", which allow to reduce the effects of a disaster by adequately preparing the population (or evacuating the area) before disaster strikes, thus minimizing damages and losses. And these are only a few examples of the many IDNDR activities and achievements.

In February 1999 a United Nations conference was held in Santo Domingo on the evaluation of preparedness and response to hurricanes Georges and Mitch, and in June 1999 the IDNDR held its closing hemispheric conference in Costa Rica. This Decade has now come to an end (1989-1999), with a closing conference in Geneva in July 5-9, 1999. The work that has been accomplished is highly commendable and should certainly be pursued even more in-depth. Some excellent work was made, and a broad networks of researchers and scientists of all types as well as NGOs worked to improve public safety and response to natural disasters. Regional and international cooperation has been strengthened and new community based groups have sprung in the wake of increased awareness to disasters. New technology has

[157] "Partenariats pour un monde plus sûr au XXIème siècle", dossier de presse, Programme Forum 1999 DIPCN, Geneva, 5-9 July 1999, p. 45-46.

been placed at the service of humanity for disaster reduction. And yet by not making a clear separation between prevention and response the IDNDR objectives has found its impact seriously limited. The use of ill-defined concepts, such as that of "mitigation" has caused several misunderstandings amongst disaster practitioners and has demonstrated the lack of a clear conceptual plan for disaster management. Today varying interpretations of the concept of "mitigation" still exist, which makes an consensual agreement around a unique model quite impossible. For some professionals mitigation includes prevention, preparedness *as well as response*[158] whereas for others mitigation are the measures and activities undertaken prior to the occurrence of the disaster and are a separate part of disaster management.[159]
The single most difficult and unresolved issue is the causal relation between successful prevention activities and its consequences in disaster response, and the economics of disaster reduction. While these issues are of fundamental importance, they have not been addressed in any depth by the IDNDR. And yet they should be foremost among continued disaster reduction activities and policies because they imply a choice of priorities.

Prevention or response? the perverse dynamics of aid

"We must, above all, shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. …Prevention is not only more humane than cure; it is also much cheaper…Achieving prevention... requires better early warning …. Better policies to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. But above all it means greater efforts to reduce vulnerability in the first place. …The United Nations is not alone in the disaster prevention field…..Real progress will require Member States, NGOS and international organizations to work together on advocacy, networking and consensus building, creating the sorts of global coalition that we saw in the campaigns to ban landmines …".[160]

Apparently all would agree that prevention is better than cure. Not only better, but cheaper. If this is true, what is the percentage that each government allocates from their budget to disaster prevention activities? If prevention is cheaper than cure, there should be an overwhelming investment in prevention activities worldwide. Where are the case studies which demonstrate higher cost-effectiveness of prevention activities over disaster response? In truth there hasn't been any comprehensive economic study to demonstrate cost-effectiveness of global prevention. Only sector specific or context specific studies exist (for example in terms of resilience of infrastructures to natural disasters, houses, schools and hospitals - from PAHO/IDNDR/World Bank among others), but no global prevention model which could inspire the world's nations.

One reason could be that effective prevention implies an opportunity cost that many nations are not willing or simply not capable of assuming : diminished external assistance when prevention is able to drastically curb the death toll and reduce the level of destruction. Different examples will be used to illustrate this apparent contradiction.

Early warning in Cuba

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[158] *Inter alia* for the Head of the Emergency Division of a leading UN agency
[159] See for example "lecciones aprendidas en América Latina de mitigación de desastres en instalaciones de Salud", PAHO/IDNDR, op. cit., p. 12 or "Natural disasters : strategies for mitigation and disaster response", German IDNDR Series 17, Final Report, 1999, figure 4.1 p. 23
[160] excerpts from the United Nations Secretary-General speech at the IDNDR Geneva conference, 5 July 1999. Text of UN Press release SG/SM/99/201

According to the United Nations, “hurricanes and cyclones which affected the island recently caused severe damage and economic losses, but surprisingly few lives were lost. An efficient system of flood monitoring and regional hurricane forecast, together with a firm and clear policy of timely evacuation of potential hazard areas, deserve credit for the few losses suffered. This circumstance generated two unforeseen negative aspects : low media coverage and a reduced assistance from the donor community”[161].

In other words, a small number of deaths is not enough to attract the attention of the international media and therefore there is a lack of international public awareness. Consequently donors have no public opinion pressure to respond generously to a disaster. This raises a very essential question as to the usefulness of prevention. Is it really necessary and desirable? Or is effective prevention not likely to rest donor support from much needed relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction funding?

Natural disaster damage, losses and deaths in China

In China natural disasters in the nineties have taken a heavy economic toll throughout the decade, representing from 3 to 6 percent of GNP[162]. But the amount of human lives lost have been reduced substantially through a clear commitment to prevention and application of preparedness measures at all levels. A comparison between three watershed floods of similar types yields the following result : 1931 flood 145,000 dead, 1954 flood 33,000 dead, 1998 flood 4,150 dead[163]. These figures are a clear example of success stories in disaster reduction, but they come at a cost. Remember the amount of the UN appeal as compared to the domestic resources mobilized and the funds spent.

The Mitch affected countries

Several countries have been affected directly by hurricane Mitch, and others are now being indirectly affected. In terms of direct losses and human lives lost, Honduras and Nicaragua bear almost two thirds of the burden, while Guatemala and El Salvador share the remaining third. Other countries such as Costa Rica, Panama or Belize have also been affected, but not with the intensity that the hurricane hit the other countries. However in the post disaster phase Mitch peripheral countries are increasingly suffering from an indirect result of Mitch : massive migration from the Mitch affected countries.

In terms of disaster prevention it is difficult to identify if specific prevention measures were taken in a timely fashion by any of the governments. In a region also plagued by natural disasters, there remains a culture of reaction rather than a culture of prevention. In reality prevention is perceived as a politically correct trend, but not necessarily as something into which government should invest many efforts. Unlike the above two examples of clear prevention commitment from two allegedly non-democratic regimes, it would appear that democratic governments of Central America have yet to show similar results as those obtained by Cuba and China in disaster reduction. Starting with a clear commitment from the presidency and the government towards active prevention efforts.

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[161] PAHO/IDNDR, “Hacia un mundo mas seguro frente a los desastres naturales”, box 5.13, p. 68, PAHO, 1994.

[162] China National Committee for IDNDR, China National Report on IDNDR, Appendixes, June 1999, p. 15 and 16.

[163] Ibid., p. 18.

In the Santo Domingo and Costa Rica conferences held by the United Nations, it was more than once mentioned that disasters open "windows of opportunity". It is an elegant way of saying that disasters are able to attract substantial donor support which may help finance relief, rehabilitation and rebuilding of a country. So in reality and although no one will publicly admit it, governments of Mitch affected countries will likely continue to operate on reactive basis, in order to avoid the negative effects experienced by Cuba when effective prevention reduces the death toll to almost nothing. It would seem that if there are no dead it is not a disaster worth the attention of the international media. And absence of international media coverage automatically translates into shallow donor support, if any. Thus effective prevention has a perverse effect of lowering media coverage of a disaster, with consequently lower donor support for the affected country. In our today's world of immediate information, it would seem as if only what is visible is worth attention. If there is nothing to show, there is nothing to be done. This type of attitude is most counterproductive, as it avoids any analysis as to the underlying root causes and factors of vulnerability in favor of quick impact visibility. It is urgent to change the dominating view that if there's nothing to see, then there's nothing to do. The actual dynamics of aid are based on the visible relation between disaster-victims (as expressed by the number of dead or dying)-media coverage-donor response. When victims are few, there is a general lack of interest both from the media and donors.
So who wants and can afford effective prevention?

The conclusion of all this is that effective prevention depends very much on the level of political commitment, public opinion pressure/awareness and on the level of economic resources available. If the political will exists, despite scarce economic resources as expressed by per capita GNP, effective prevention can be implemented (Cuba, China). But absence of political commitment coupled with poverty and lack of public opinion pressure is an unequivocal sign that effective prevention literally cannot be afforded. Political commitment from rich countries allows for fancy and expensive prevention programs to be designed, some of which are destined to low-income countries such as the Mitch affected countries[164]. Finally, the lack of political commitment in rich countries leaves it in the hands of civil society to develop prevention programs commensurate with the level of exposure of the country to natural disasters (public awareness of disaster history).

This could be represented in the following table, in which results in prevention are based on two essential factors : political commitment and economic resources (as defined by per capita GNP). Although the model is relatively simple, it draws attention to the type of resources (political and economic) which are necessary to be able to have effective prevention programs.

PREVENTION MATRIX	**Political commitment**	**No political commitment**
low GNP	*possible but at a price* (low media coverage thus low external donor support for disaster response)	*no effective prevention* donor funded projects accepted as politically correct but no firm undertaking
high GNP	*state of the art*, high technology effective prevention programs	*minimum standards* covered depends on awareness and public opinion pressure

[164] For example Nordic countries finance high technology early warning projects in Central America, but no report has publicly been circulated on their effectiveness during Mitch.

Despite numerous evaluations carried out as a result of Mitch, there hasn't been any comprehensive evaluation of prevention projects in the area. The author of this book has tried to convince various donors on the need and adequacy for such an evaluation to take place, but to no avail[165]. Donors only seem interested in relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation costs : the time for prevention is over once disaster has struck. A seemingly very simplistic vision as to the role and effectiveness of prevention and its links with relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. So despite the discourse of the UN Secretary General, there remains perverse practices which have yet to be corrected if the shift to a culture of prevention in natural disasters is to become a reality in developing countries at any time in the future and not merely a luxury item which can only be afforded by rich countries.

Shifting the focus of assistance

Another trend which has been highlighted by hurricane Mitch is the type of assistance given by the NGOs and Red Cross. Over the last twenty years the type of assistance has shifted from sector specific activities in which organizations possessed the necessary technical capacity to a more integrated approach, following a holistic vision of multi-sectoral assistance as needs demand. In fact, activities have gone from strict short-term emergency aid to comprehensive assistance in relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development activities (including prevention and preparedness programs).

In the seventies fewer organizations were able to respond to large-scale international disaster, and those which did (such as the Red Cross or the French Doctors -MSF, MDM, etc.-) undertook essentially short-term emergency assistance. Because of the cold war and the incapacity to solve conflicts (in the Americas, in Africa, in Europe and in Asia) given the confrontation between Eastern or Western imperialism worldwide, assistance which should have been short-term emergency extended itself in time in some cases for many years. Examples of this are in the eighties the long lasting camps of Cambodian refugees in Thailand, or of Salvadorian refugees in Honduras. At the same time numerous conflicts and strife continued unabated worldwide such as in the Philippines, East Timor, Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Chad, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, only to name a few. The fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the cold war has placed new responsibilities on the UN, NGO and Red Cross community, which were able to venture into activities going beyond emergency relief. At the same time the structure of conflict changed radically, and conflicts became increasingly internal rather than international as foreseen by the Geneva Conventions. This new type of warfare, more subtle and perverse than traditional conflicts, placed civilian population as the backbone of their strategy. Civilians are no longer akin to conflicts, but are an integral part of military strategy.

The so-called "window of opportunity" which is created by disasters apply just as much, if not more, in case of conflicts and man-made disasters. Indeed the end of the cold war was instrumental in creating windows of opportunities in disasters. By allowing assistance to go beyond emergency, new approaches were developed. In 1990 in Mozambique, and even before the signing of the peace agreement between the Renamo and the Chissano government, the United Nations and the NGO community was already linking relief and rehabilitation projects, including many activities which were traditionally considered more as "development oriented" (such as small-scale income generating activities through community associations and

[165] Apparently the Swiss Cooperation was willing to carry out a comprehensive joint evaluation, without taking the lead role, but the project failed to materialize for lack of other donors' support.

cooperatives - fishing, woodwork, farming, etc.-). The reason for linking these projects were two : first the relative facility to obtain funding under the “emergency” label as compared to funding under the “development” label (both in terms of requirement and delays in obtaining the funds). Two that because needs had arisen in an emergency phase it was necessary to link rehabilitation and development projects in order to avoid gaps (between emergency and development) which could cause beneficiaries to fall back into a more vulnerable situation given the lack of timely support. (Or said in other words the notorious incapacity of the UN agencies to streamline and coordinate activities among themselves, especially between the “emergency” and “development” specialists…). And Mozambique is only one example of how the new world geopolitics influenced the structure of assistance.

In the nineties the external interventions in Somalia, Rwanda, the Ex-Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia) and now Serbia (Kosovo) shared two basic characteristics : they enjoyed widespread international media coverage, thus initially widespread public support, so funding was easily obtained despite the high costs involved.

Because of the large availability of money for humanitarian activities, many NGOs which had been operating only in specific sectors or specific activities found themselves involved in larger programs for which they had no previous experience or management capacity. This applies to both emergency and development oriented NGOs. Because of large needs in recovery, rehabilitation, local capacity building and reconstruction, NGOs traditionally only involved in emergency became integrated program managers practically overnight. The same applies to NGOs who were present in the country before the crisis, and who (unlike the UN development agencies) did not close their office during the emergency but choose to stay and cope with the situation, developing new skills in emergency assistance. As a result the distinction among NGOs based as previously on the level of expertise or experience in specific areas or sectors has been completely set aside. Today all those NGOs which were able to chip in the “windows of opportunity” of the 1990 crises have transformed themselves into experts of integrated programs ranging from emergency to development. But at what cost?

There is no doubt that the need for a holistic vision of integrated assistance is necessary and much more sensible than the traditional system of assistance based on phases and sectors of activity (which is the obsolete model still followed by the United Nations). But results are very unequal.

At UN level

Within the UN system, there lacks an overall supervising and coordinating body for the assistance given. Although in theory this is the mandate of OCHA, in practice this doesn’t work. In conflicts the HCR has a mandate for refugee assistance. WFP is responsible for food procurement. UNICEF deals in a range of services, allegedly targeting women and children. All these operational agencies have greater budgets and staff and are not willing to be coordinated by another UN agency. In practice things are even more complicated, since at country levels the highest UN representative (with ambassador rank in a number of countries) is the Resident Representative (or Res. Rep., or Resident Coordinator), which supposedly represents the whole of the UN system and holds a status above the rest of UN agencies’ heads and representatives. A humanitarian coordinator from OCHA is normally placed in a cell at UNDP when a crisis occur, under the supervision of the UN Res. Rep. But being able to efficiently coordinate any response requires acrobatic skills. Not only must the Humanitarian Coordinator be able to get along

with all the UN heads of agencies and the UN Res. Rep., but she or he must also report to the headquarters of her or his organization, which is were orders are taken. And this is valid for all of the heads of agencies, meaning that horizontal coordination (in-country among UN agencies) and vertical coordination (from the Head of the UN agency to Headquarters in New York, Geneva or Rome as the case might be) are of paramount importance if any transversal coordination is to be achieved. Practice has demonstrated that the UN system is a heavy and inefficient bureaucracy with an excess focus on financial accountability rather than on effectiveness. There is a lack of a central authority with real will, knowledge, capacity, experience and means to ensure adequate coordination. This can be illustrated by several examples which relate to the real power of the UN Resident Representative (or UNDP Representative).

Despite holding an ambassador rank in some countries, the Res. Rep. has in fact very limited powers. No capacity to hire or fire permanent personnel (local as well as expatriated staff). No capacity to intervene into other agencies' decisions or budget (decisions are taken at each agency's headquarters on the basis of the in-country head of agency's reports and proposals. For example, the decision to supply food to Rwanda in 1994 was taken by WFP Rome, on the basis of the in-country WFP director's report and proposal.). Thus no orders can be given to any of the other head of agencies. The Res. Rep. normally has a small budget as compared to colleagues from emergency operational agencies (HCR; WFP; UNICEF, etc.), which rests weight and credibility of the UN Res. Rep. (For example total development aid budget in Burundi in 1994 amounted to some US$ 100 million, as compared to UN emergency assistance of US$. 163 million for six months or a total of US$. 311 million for 1994).[166] And things become still a little more complicated when the UN Secretary General sends his Special Representative to a country (as happened in Rwanda and Burundi in 1994). The level of collaboration between the UN Res. Rep. and the UNSG Special Representative is not always ideal and sometimes confrontations arise over responsibilities and division of labor. It should be remembered that UN Resident Representatives are not selected by the Secretary General but by a posting system which allows a number of candidates from within the system to request a specific post in a country.

So the highest ranking UN official is in fact not so powerful when it comes to overall coordination of the entire UN system. This dilution of responsibilities can in part explain UN delays when quick, decisive actions are required.

At another level in technical terms, the division of labor between the UN agencies has long reached its limits. The alleged "sectors" of activities has shown its flaws, contributing more to competition among UN agencies than complement in action. An example of this is the figure war for the refugee caseload in the Great Lakes during the Rwanda crisis, in which HCR (responsible of the refugee camps) and WFP (responsible for food supply) were constantly arguing over the "true" figures. In some cases operational agencies have duplicate structures (each agency has its procurement system, its list of consultants and experts, its logistics and communication means which it keeps jealously to itself, and uses only for its own programs.) Again it should be remembered that the UN structure is the relics of past times. The division of labor along so-called "sectors of activity" may appeal theoretically, but it in practice there may be more weaknesses than strengths in this system. It has clearly shown not to be suited to the actual challenges which require a unified command structure, a comprehensive plan of integrated assistance and adaptability to changing conditions. In addition it must prove much more agile and

[166] See the Burundi case study annex, table 3.16 and 4.1 for details.

efficient in dealing with a crisis, with a more adequate planning capacity and a community-based strategic approach which has yet to be integrated among the UN priorities. Not only on paper and in public fora, but in practice.

In fact in the United Nations there are two different attitudes which vary according to the level: that used with donors, the media or in conferences which is essentially a justification of the United Nations and the need for its continued existence and that of its agencies. But there is another level which stems from the reality of facts. The growing disconnection between the UN agencies and the communities and people who are actually suffering from disasters on the ground. The United Nations seems more set on its public image and a macro vision than on ground effectiveness of its operations. The strategic choice to appease donors and governments rather than answering to victims' needs shows a somewhat distorted vision of reality. Money isn't everything. The United States may actually be controlling the UN system, but it remains its largest debtor.
Again referring to the Santo Domingo and Costa Rica conferences, it was worrisome to see how debates and panels were steered towards politically correct orientations, but without addressing the fundamental issues of disaster reduction. Those people who represented the first level of collective action, the people from affected communities (some local authorities such as mayors, but also others from local organizations) could hear brilliant theories of disaster reduction, but little practical advise. Participants were told what to do, but never how to do it. International conferences keep establishing objectives, without looking at how these objectives should be achieved and without considering the resources and constraints of each nation. As if results and objectives could be achieved independently of the level of resources available.

As a result it would seem that all countries are in the same boat when in fact they are not. Some rich countries possess transatlantic cruisers for disaster reduction, while some developing countries only have at best a rubber dinghy or a small life boat. Presentations from the different IDNDR delegations at the closing Geneva forum made this blatant : contrasting the German presentation on flood reduction where no one was injured and only material losses were suffered with Mitch clearly shows the different worlds in which we live, each marked by the widely different level of opportunity of each country.
It is high time that the United Nations steers its actions towards more successful ground and community based efficacy and less focus on high international profile. Its complete restructuring is a necessity which has been echoed by many governments. It is only a question of time before this happens.

At NGO and Red Cross level

The shift from UN multilateral assistance to bilateral assistance through NGOs and Red Cross is partly a response to the above criticism. NGOs and Red Cross have demonstrated a higher and better capacity to adapt and reformulate their programs and activities on the basis on identified needs. In this they have come much closer to the communities than the UN agencies.
By doing so in many cases there have been success stories of comprehensive integrated assistance packages which should be encouraged and pursued. But there have equally been a number of abuses and less successful stories which raises a number of still unanswered questions on the role of NGOs and Red Cross.
One of the basic questions is : what is the value added of the NGO/Red Cross intervention? In other words, what does the involvement of the NGO give that could not have been obtained otherwise?

In this answers need to be differentiated, again looking back to previous aid structures. The traditional aid given only in the area of activity in which the NGO possessed skills and experience is long past. (It should be remembered that the Red Cross was born as a result of the Solferino battle back in 1859, with the initial objective of giving assistance to the war wounded. Today members of the Red Cross movement are involved in a wide range of activities the scope of which varies according to the context and needs, including post-emergency rehabilitation activities).

Because of the "widow of opportunity" of the 1990's disasters, the shift towards an integrated approach was undertaken. Another factor which explains this trend is directly related to donors' procedures. Donor staff is often overburdened : one way to diminish the workload is to finance large programs through one single NGO, rather than funding ten different projects each through a different NGO. The latter requires almost ten times more work for the same amount of funds spent. From a donor perspective advantages are clear : a reduced workload, one single counterpart with whom to deal (i.e. only one evaluation, one activity report, one contract to manage, etc.) The work caseload can thus be drastically reduced if entire programs are funded through NGOs instead of financing individual projects each through the most experienced and skillful NGO. In a world of global economy and finance, assistance is also becoming global.

By itself this trend is not necessarily negative. But if the effectiveness and impact of global programs managed by a single counterpart are not adequately evaluated, there is a risk that things could go wrong and affect the credibility and impact of assistance. In fact a number of strange practices have plagued the assistance to Bosnia, by far the most politically sensitive of the 1990 crises with the exception of the current Kosovo crisis. During the crisis in Bosnia media coverage and public opinion brought up tremendous pressures on donor governments. As a result in financing assistance large sums were spent loosely irrespective of needs, programs or impact, but as a political demonstration that donors governments were doing something.[167] And this apparently was not an isolated case.

What needs to be done is to see the advantages and disadvantages of NGOs running large programs : but not from the point of view of donor, of the media, of public opinion or of governments, rather from the perspective of aid beneficiaries.
But one should be careful not to mix aid objectives with efficiency of aid. In other words, beneficiaries will hardly ever reject any form of aid (something is always better than nothing). What is at stake is not only the objectives (are they based on needs and adequate priorities?) but how the objectives are reached (performance and value added of the NGO). This is the type of evaluation requested, which so far has yet to be undertaken. Obviously so, since donor interests may clearly not be the same as beneficiaries' priorities. But a more efficient and effective form of aid necessarily must address these issues of compatibility between donor objectives and procedures, NGO objectives and procedures and integrate the essential perspective of beneficiaries' objectives and needs.

A rough and incomplete exercise of strengths and weakness analysis of NGO involvement shows the following :

[167] Two NGOs informed me that when requesting financing for emergency projects in Bosnia (95-97) the donor allocated twice the amount requested, saying that the NGOs would need it anyway…

Two approaches to aid	Strengths	Weaknesses
traditional sector specific assistance	1. technical expertise and previous experience 2. knowledge of human and material resources required	1. limited assistance, requires completion by others of unanswered needs 2. may be insufficient by itself to guarantee life-saving and preserving objectives will be met 3. only covers one phase (emergency or other)
new comprehensive type of assistance (funds allowing) *Ideal model : holistic approach covering all needs (sector and phases)*	3. multi-sectoral; assistance in a wide range of areas; ideally integrated approach 4. covering all identified needs in a specific geographic area and flexibility to adapt sector specific activities to overall program goal as needed 5. may include emergency, recovery, rehabilitation, local capacity building, reconstruction and development activities	4. greater responsibility placed on the NGO in areas where expertise may be lacking; 5. requires a closer control and monitoring of program management from donor; 6. identification of means necessary and adequate planning not always done (management capacity)

The previous table partially answers the question as to the value added of NGO participation, at least in the traditional assistance scheme of technical expertise in a given area (medical, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, nutrition, food distribution, etc.). But what is the value added of having an NGO run a comprehensive program without necessarily possessing adequate management skills? Is it not pushing the NGO to assume greater responsibility than its capacity allows?

Much depends on the type of comprehensive program and the numbers and types of project components. Most agreements between donors and NGOs or Red Cross are not grand multimillionaire programs, but partially integrated programs which may cover a selection of projects components according to needs, but not covering all needs in a holistic manner (both all sectors and all phases of activity). It is not the case of one single NGO covering all needs throughout all phases in a specifically designated geographical catchment area. So in most cases the extension of NGO involvement is a gradual approach which allows for the NGO to gain experience and knowledge in new forms of assistance, but without placing an undue burden on the NGO. It should also be remembered that some activities which represent large portions of a budget are actually quite simple and easily managed (such as food distribution), not requiring any specific technical skill, while others require a much greater technical capacity (for example all construction activities, including housing). So the type of activities and their time-frame determine the level of complexity of operations.

The role of the private sector

Traditionally in humanitarian aid the private sector has largely been by-passed as a money-making machine incompatible with the humanistic objectives which motivate NGO involvement. But this negative attitude is certainly changing. While the private sector is still bent on profit, it has come to realize that benefits could be reaped from an active participation into politically correct activities alongside NGOs in international aid operations. Among other examples in response to Mitch Union Fenosa put at the disposal of the Spanish Red Cross a group of thirty two professional trained in wide range of activities, fully paid for a six months period to be used as needed in any of the Mitch affected countries. (something like lending its staff, so to speak). The HCR in Kosovo received the assistance from two computer companies for registration of the refugee caseload. And the trend of private sector participation is humanitarian operations is growing. Aid actors should welcome a more active involvement of private companies, especially in the form of free human resources and materials, even if these companies will make some indirect profit from their involvement. After all, if participating in disaster reduction and humanitarian operations grants a label of credibility to a company, so be it.
What must be controlled and ensured is that field presence of private companies alongside NGOs will not be used for direct business transactions during the course of operations.

The question becomes a little more complex when one is looking at large integrated multimillion programs, such as those financed by the European Union in Bosnia in 1997 through the private firm Brown & Root. The question arises as to why a private group was contracted for a range of services which included rehabilitation, construction and development activities. Could the NGOs not have taken a charge of this program?
This answer obviously is no. Not only did the NGO community not have the means, expertise or technology to undertake the complex integrated resettlement project allocated to Brown and Root, but these tenders are given to private professional organizations, and not NGOs, with specific clauses that NGOs would likely not accept.
So in fact in disasters there exists a large window of opportunity for profit oriented firms, which are able to reap large rewards from the contracting of its services in the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, independently from the services provided by the NGO community, given the incapacity of NGOs in undertaking similar programs.

But there are some types of activities within multisectoral programs in which the value added of NGO managed projects are being questioned. One is the housing sector, an expensive but highly visible activities which is fast becoming a favorite among donors given its high visibility. Because housing and construction require very specific technical skills, NGOs have little direct involvement. Rather what is being done is to sub-contract a private company in order to carry out the housing rehabilitation or construction. Of all the NGOs with a housing/reconstruction budget in Bosnia in 1997, very few provided any technical assistance, the large majority essentially sub-contracting private specialized services. In this case, the value added of the NGO is quite questionable, since this only raises the overhead costs of the construction. Indeed in this case NGOs are being used as construction managers/supervisors, in areas where they hold no comparative advantage.
In these specific cases, guidelines should be established. If NGOs cannot show an added value for their intervention in certain activities, it may be more convenient and effective to create a pool of private contractors which could be hired by donors, more specifically perhaps for technical rehabilitation and reconstruction. Or else it should

be made clear that NGOs are funded as sub-contracting managers to supervise the reconstruction work because of their field presence. In any case, and in order to maintain the credibility of humanitarian organizations, a clear difference should be made between the activities which an organization is implementing itself and those activities which are sub-contracted to other implementing partners or private contractors. It may be good publicity to declare that an organization is involved in ten different types of activities, but credibility is much lower when one finds out that it only implements half the activities and the other half have been sub-contracted. In fact it is a question of honesty and transparency about the activities of humanitarian organizations.

B. The NATO offensive on Serbia in March 1999 - the Kosovo crisis

In March of 1999 after the diplomatic negotiations in Rambouillet near the French capital finalized without agreement among the parties involved NATO launched an offensive against Serbia, reportedly for the good of the Albanokosovar population in Kosovo (a province of the actual Yugoslavia) that was undergoing the kind of ethnic cleansing that had been recently perpetrated in Bosnia by Serb forces, police and paramilitary. While many chapters of this sad story remain to be written, there are several dangerous and worrying tendencies which have emerged from the onset of the conflict. It is upon these trends that a critical analysis is necessary.

Kosovo - the humanitarian conflict

The NATO offensive on Serbia showed the total control of the media (television and press) by politico-military structures. The public was told that this war was fought for "humanitarian reasons", in order to protect the Albanokosovar population in Kosovo against the exaction of president Slobodan Milosevic and his clan. When NATO strikes began, an impressive display a media followed immediately into Serbia and neighboring countries, *but not one single press or television correspondent was allowed into Kosovo*. So for weeks there was no first-hand information whatsoever as to the situation within Kosovo, only secondary reports from refugees in neighboring countries where refugee camps were hastily installed and rapidly overwhelmed (as if the population exodus could not have been foreseen…) essentially in Albania and Macedonia. Serb information was censored and discredited by western media, so the only official version of facts and of how the war unraveled was given by NATO. In this information black-out from the onset western governments with the support of the media tried to convince the public that NATO was a not only a military, but also a humanitarian agency with an original new mission of humanitarian assistance to the refugees in camps outside Kosovo.
While NATO air strikes killed an unspecified number of people (casualties were strategically willingly not disclosed in order not to erode public support), NATO military wanted to take charge of the refugee camps established along the border. In the midst of this craze, NGO's and UN agencies' frontal opposition and outspokenness in the media was able to avert disaster. The UNHCR was eventually allowed to assume its responsibility with the support of numerous NGOs and of Red Cross members.

Again the ghost of military-humanitarian interventions is under the spotlights. Again governments are trying to place humanitarian aid under control of the military, despite the blatant failures and controversies surrounding prior attempts (Restore Hope in Somalia, Turquoise in Rwanda). Given the intensive coverage of the international media in large-scale disasters and the high profile given to humanitarian aid by public opinion worldwide, governments will continue, under the cover of a

defense organization such as NATO, to battle for control of humanitarian aid operations. What governments have to gain is very clear : taking credit for the good humanitarian work carried out, thus obtaining public support for its involvement in operations. It is essentially an opportunistic and public image approach. But what humanitarian aid organizations have to gain is much less clear.

The controversy between military and humanitarian players is not new. Because of difficult and uneasy collaboration in the field, someone invented the term of "humanitarian space" in order to create some window of opportunity to justify the military involvement in humanitarian aid. Without repeating what has already been said in chapter one, the mere thought of military-civilian collaboration in humanitarian operations is not exempt of contradictions and questions, chief of which : who is in charge?

The military's objective is to make war. The objective of humanitarian aid is to provide life-saving and life-preserving assistance. This is enough to clear any doubts as to who should be in charge. Apples and oranges can't be added, just as the military and humanitarian aid. They are two different things which should be kept separate. In any case, if anyone of the two were to control the other, it should be humanitarian aid which controls the military, and not the other way around.
Terms such as "victory", "winning the war" and "defeat" do not translate well into life-saving and life-preserving activities, except for a strategy set on minimizing human casualties. But this is never an overriding objective of warfare.

Much can be argued on this subject, and there has already been a number of reportedly heated debates on the issue[168]. Finally, it should be said that usefulness of the military in humanitarian operations is extremely limited to very specific contexts, which hardly justifies a military deployment in the first place.[169] Not to mention the economic implications, when for years economists have written about the lack of productivity of defense spending.[170]

So the question of military involvement is essentially political and philosophical.
Political on the one hand because governments feel the pressure of public opinion to do something (in many cases of conflicts in developing countries governments have little or no interest, or a *strategic disinterest* as Nicholas Stockton writes) and only public opinion forces governments to take a decision. Not knowing what to do or how to do it, the military are sent as the most maneuverable instrument of foreign policy in the hands of governments. For one, the military do not question the authority or analyze the reasons for their presence : they merely obey and act according to orders. Second because information regarding military and defense are most opaque, and facts, costs and casualties are hidden, distorted or controlled in the interest of the military's government or the command structure (NATO) which controls the military. Third because the provision of humanitarian aid is not a panacea : it is only the starting point of vulnerability reduction measures which must translate into practical and realistic development programs. The underlying causes of disasters (conflicts and natural disasters alike) are often development policies which have failed to reduce human vulnerability and foment opportunities, particularly

[168] see for example the article by Oxfam's emergency director with first hand examples, "4. The Role of the Military in Humanitarian Emergencies : reflections by Nicholas Stockton", RPN 23 January-April 1997, http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/fmr/rpn234.htm
[169] see DAC, Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation, Report No 1, op. cit.
[170] See ECAAR documents (Economists Allied for Armament Reduction), with eight Nobel prize winners as members of its board of directors, or documentation from the French ECCAR which follows the same trend

among the most destitute and poor communities. So even if military protection was effective in allowing the provision of humanitarian assistance (a questionable hypothesis, very much context specific), this would only be like winning the battle, and not the war. The steps and decisions which must be taken to ensure vulnerability reduction, foment stability, opportunity and growth in a sustainable manner have absolutely nothing to do with the military. But they have much to do with humanitarian aid and development.

A different way of accounting for costs

Another dangerous trend that public opinion must force governments to change is the total lack of information on economic costs of conflicts. In this natural disasters and conflicts are very different. In natural disasters, the direct and indirect losses are quickly assessed, and so are the secondary effects, in order to come up with rehabilitation and reconstruction needs, which is the main purpose of the socio-economic evaluations undertaken. But what is missing is an evaluation of emergency humanitarian aid costs in relief operations.[171] These costs are overlooked on the grounds that they are not borne by the affected country but are financed by multilateral and bilateral external assistance (UN, NGOs, Red Cross, etc.). So in the methodology for natural disaster evaluation, emergency costs are not integrated into the overall effects valuation. Another element which is missing is the deliberate decision not to monetize (or give a monetary value) to human lives lost in a disaster. Although it has already been said that putting a price on human life is subject to a series of difficulties and that there is a general lack of consensus on methodologies to evaluate human life, it appears rather surprising that a "socio-economic" evaluation does not integrate losses of life into its calculations. Not that governments necessarily should pay out an indemnity to the family of the deceased, but because people certainly are a value. And in our current global economic system in which all things of value must necessarily have a monetary price tag, it should be of importance to see the relative value given to the number of lives lost. Among other things, because this would serve as an incentive for effective prevention activities.

In the Mitch affected countries the per capita GDP is quite low, ranging from a low of US$ 1,837 in Nicaragua to 3,682 in Guatemala.[172] Even a very rough approximation without resorting to insurance tables of an average production loss of US$. 2,000 per life lost, over a conservative estimate of 20 year production period per person, yields a non-actualized value of 40,000 us dollars per death. In the case of Mitch, the value of 18,000 lives lost as expressed in monetary terms by lost production thus amounts to a minimum of us dollars 720 million at the very least!

In conflicts, humanitarian aid costs both in relief and rehabilitation are relatively easily available since both the UN and the NGO/Red Cross community have no problems in giving full financial reports of activities. What is regularly missing is the costs of the military. Even the Joint Evaluation for Rwanda, a multi-donor large-scale system evaluation, failed to obtain cost information on the military, despite support from governments' official aid agencies.[173] So when the military are involved, cost information becomes classified, strategic information. As if knowledge of costs conferred any military advantage to the enemy. The only advantage of not giving cost information is to avoid public support erosion, when military operations such as

[171] See for example the UNECLAC "Manual for estimating the socio-economic effects of natural disasters", ECLAC/IDNDR, May 1999

[172] in 1995 PPP dollars, UNDP "Rapport Mondial …1998", op. cit., p. 150

[173] See the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, op. cit., documents 1 to 4 and synthesis, and in particular document 3 "Humanitarian aid and effects".

the NATO offensive in Kosovo prove not only ineffective (at least in terms of protecting the Albanokosovar population in Kosovo, which was one the main argument used to justify NATO strikes) but are also economic aberrations.

The huge costs of warfare, estimated at some us dollars 100 million daily, was not an issue for the members of the alliance. After 77 days of military operations and air strikes (from 24 March 1999 until 10 June 1999 when offensive operations were suspended) total costs run near a hefty 7.7 billion us dollars, not counting running military costs since or the deployment of peace troops. This is equal to some 1,242 billion pesetas, or some 1.4% of Spain GDP of 88.1 trillion pesetas, and is well over Spain's total defense budget.[174] Reportedly these cost are few if one is to compare them with the costs almost thirteen times greater of Operation Desert Storm in the war against Iraq in 1991, as reported by the International Institute of Strategic Studies.[175] In regards to the cost of peace keeping, the US Congress Budget Office has estimated the cost of 27,000 soldiers in Kosovo at some 200 million US$ per month, while military sources indicated that 4,000 soldiers would cost some 2 billion US$ annually, or 167 million US$ monthly[176].

On the other hand the number of civilian casualties due to NATO mistakes amounted to 378 people (while the Serb authorities claim some 2,000 civilian casualties during the war)[177]. One could apply similar calculations to the victims killed by NATO during the war as the economic estimates of the deaths caused by hurricane Mitch. NATO should thus at least indemnify the families of those it recognized having killed by error as war reparation.

Strangely there were less problems among NATO members in assuming the huge costs of warfare than having those same governments reach an agreement on the share of reconstruction costs to be borne by each nation.

The arms industry is obviously the big winner in any conflict. It should be remembered that the five UN security members are also the main arms exporters[178], and that new conflicts offer a testing ground for new toys of destruction and inevitable commercial opportunities leading to the signing of profitable arms contract.

What is incredible is that governments are able to have public opinion accept to pay twice for the same thing : once for military spending and warfare, and a second time for rehabilitation and reconstruction costs to repair damages caused by war. Conflict winners are the arms industry, which have been capable of field testing the latest high technology toys (who knows NATO's selection criteria for the arms and means to be used in warfare, or the weight of arms lobbies within NATO?), and the losers are two : war victims and NATO member taxpayers.

Maybe it is time to have a little more equitable division of the burden by the first and principal beneficiary of war : the arms industry. What would be more natural than to have the arms industry dedicating a share of its sales volume to finance rehabilitation and reconstruction activities? This would entail a better and more just

[174] EL PAÍS, article "Los aliados ya han gastado 1,13 billones de pesetas en la guerra, más que le presupuesto español de Defensa", 8 June 1999, p. 6.
[175] Ibidem.
[176] Ibidem.
[177] EL PAÍS, article "La "guerra limpia" de la OTAN estuvo salpicada de errores, pero permitió una victoria aplastante", 11 June 1999, p. 8
[178] together accounting for more than 80% of arms sold to developing countries 1988-1992, see UNDP Rapport Mondial ….1994, op. cit., diagrams 3.3 and 3.6 p. 59 for arms trade figures

allocation of resources instead of heavily draining taxpayers' pockets in favor of a few chosen defense contractors.

In conclusion people like Serb President Milosevic are a perfect excuse given to the arms industry to lobby for greater spending on defense and reverse the trend of reduced military spending given unending strife in the Balkans. (Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo). Conflicts not only reduce peace dividends but slow the transformation of large military-industrial complex into more productive activities. As an example, in Spain 54% of the research and development (R&D) public budget went for military research in 1999, as compared to 18% of the R&D budget allocated to education and culture. R&D budgets for military objectives have increased five-fold since 1995.[179]

We should no longer accept the misinformation in conflicts as an inevitable fact of life. There is a need to obtain transparency in military and defense matters, rather than accepting the feeble argument that military information is classified information. After all, are we not living in democratic societies, in which supposedly people (δεμοσ) are the essence of the State and its highest expression?

[179] EL PAÍS, article "El 54% del gasto público de 1999 en investigación es para fines militares", 9 May 1999, p. 26.

CHAPTER SIX : *from humanitarian aid to humanitarian politics*

1. Humanitarian and development aid : who does what

Humanitarian and development aid have been presented heretofore as a rather homogeneous sum of the activities undertaken by nonetheless very different kinds of organizations. A very short presentation, using IFRC's typology for disaster response, allows to divide aid agencies into three basic categories :

1) **NGOs,** Non-Governmental Organizations. Hundreds of NGOs exist in practically every major donor country, but a number of local NGOs also exist in developing countries. Worldwide there are thousands of NGOs[180]., each with its own status, working in a specific field and with its own objectives. Some NGOs work in emergency, others in development, others do both Some work in natural disasters, others in conflict situations, others in both. Some cover only specific sectors of activity (i.e. medical NGOs), while others only cover specific groups of beneficiary (i.e. refugee assistance groups). This category is by far the largest both in terms of the number of organizations and in terms of resource availability.
2) **NGHAs** (Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies), which in addition to NGOs, encompasses the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC, IFRC and National Societies). Any other agency of similar characteristics, but not registered as an NGO would equally be included in this category. While the distinction between NGO and NGHA is essentially based on legal considerations, both kinds of organizations are Non-Governmental.
3) **IGOs** (Inter-Governmental Organizations). This category comprises all of the United Nations Agencies (UNHCR, WFP, DHA, UNICEF, WHO/PAHO, FAO, UNDP, etc.) as well as all regional organizations in which two or more governments are involved (such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for African Unity (OAU), the European Union (EU), etc.).

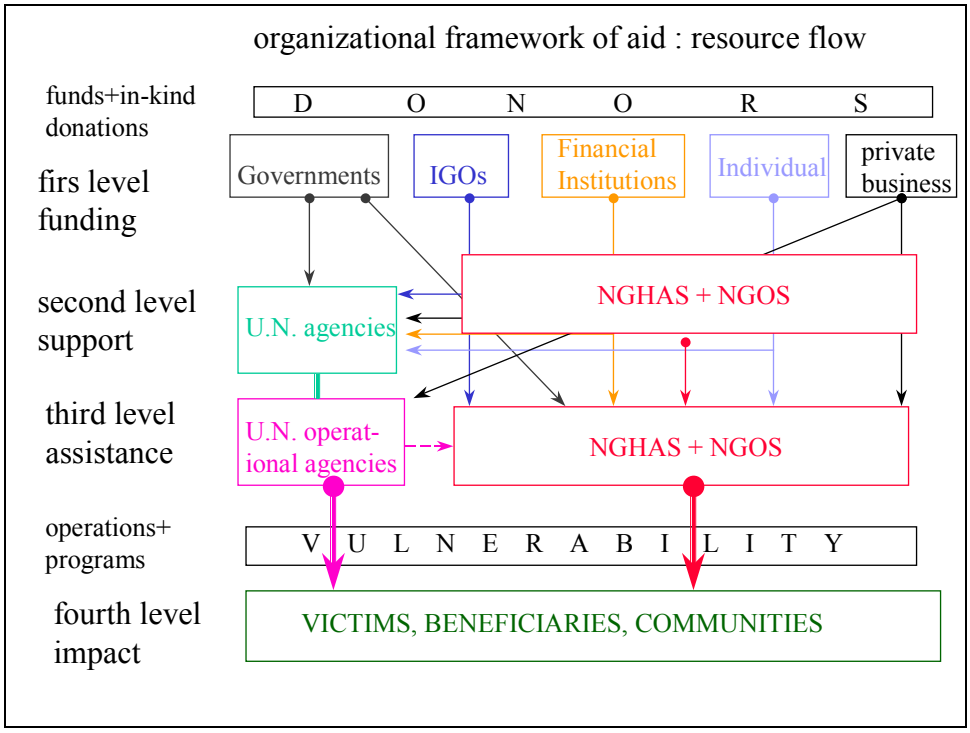
Among IGOs the United Nations agencies can be divided in two categories : operational (i.e. HCR; WFP, UNICEF, etc.) and non-operational organizations (FAO, WHO, etc.). Operational agencies have both the capacity to implement programs and the ability to function as donors, sub-contracting NGHAs to implement specific programs (in humanitarian aid). Non-operational agencies essentially provide financial support (though they may also provide technical expertise or research oriented materials), but do not normally have the capacity to implement projects at ground level themselves (humanitarian aid).

To complete the picture, it is necessary to include donors, which are indispensable to allow any aid process to take place. In this, **governments** and **financial institutions** (such as the World Bank, the International Development Bank, and regional institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Development Bank, etc.) play an essential role. Additionally, outside any institutional framework but equally important is the concerned individual who gives from his own pocket to a charity or NGO/NGHA. More than the mere amount of money, **individual donations** also give NGOs/NGHAs a certain level of legitimacy and representation of those concerned citizens who help finance its activities. Finally it is also important to consider the

[180] As an example the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 was reportedly attended by 2.400 NGOs (www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html)

increasing involvement of the **private sector** in humanitarian aid either through donations or direct involvement. (for example two major computer firms have helped humanitarian agencies in the registration process of beneficiaries in Kosovo)

The participation, interaction and coordination between these organizations is what makes humanitarian aid a reality. The flow of resources is represented in the following box.



1.1. Humanitarian aid

There are hundreds, possibly thousands of humanitarian aid players worldwide (NGOs, NGHAs and IGOs). The diversity and variety of players involved in humanitarian assistance makes it a highly complex situations. By the end 1994 more than 300 humanitarian aid organizations were reportedly operating in the Great Lakes, in Rwanda and neighboring countries. In 1991 according to the Ministry of Cooperation 112 NGOs were registered as operating in Mozambique. The management of operations involving such a large number of players represents quite a challenge for those in charge of coordinating humanitarian operations.

It would be impossible to present or discuss, even briefly, the activities of all humanitarian agencies. Foremost because of their number and their heterogeneous nature. Because despite a common humanitarian agenda, each may work according to its own specific operating procedures, which very greatly vary from one organization to the next. Some organizations only provide assistance in one sector, while others provide a whole range of assistance activities. Some only operate in the emergency phase, while others also extend their activities into rehabilitation and development activities. Some organizations are made up of essentially of good-willed people but limited means, while some others are extremely powerful and are even able to influence donors. It is thus not possible to brush even a tentative summary of the world of humanitarian organizations.

However out of the very high number of NGOs existing the number of those with a proven track record over the years is much smaller. Unlike development assistance which was institutionalized after World War II (United Nations and Bretton Woods organizations) over half a century ago humanitarian aid has only recently become popular, and few organizations have proven their professionalism for more than two decades. As such it should be understood that despite high standards humanitarian organizations seek to achieve, recently changing patterns in humanitarian aid and its increased responsibility in crises (such as conflicts caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union - Ex-Yugoslavia, Chechenia, etc. and now Kosovo) resulting from incapacity and unwillingness of governments to effectively tackle grass root humanitarian problems and come up with adequate solutions may result in a less than optimal results in some operations. At the same time, each crisis is different and may open a window of opportunity which is rarely adequately exploited. In the most recent crisis to date, the NATO offensive on Yugoslavia, we have seen a new, dangerous and uneasy partnership between politicians, military and humanitarian aid players. Again policy makers and politician attempt to capitalize on humanitarian principles. NATO initially tried to appear as a humanitarian organization by taking charge of some refugee camps and coordination of humanitarian aid (while at the same time bombing everyday Yugoslavia). Fortunately the opposition and outspokenness of NGOs and humanitarian aid players in the media proved instrumental in having UNHCR assume its mandate.

To avoid any confusion responsibilities should be streamlined. It is publicly recognized that humanitarian aid is a temporary remedy, but never a solution since it is not given the means to address the root causes of the event which prompted its intervention. As such it appears like a fire brigade called in to extinguish a forest fire. It must cut down trees and prepare fire walls on the ground to prevent the extension of the fire or it will be unable to control and extinguish it. A fire brigade is provided with adequate means to accomplish its task (special equipment -including helicopters and planes- and training) so that action will have a direct impact on the fire. At the same time, it is equally subject to conditions outside its control but which are a part of its operating environment : weather conditions (e.g. wind patterns) which may decisively influence the outcome of the fire brigade's work, accessibility of the area, etc., much the same as in humanitarian aid

There are no vertical programs which can integrate all hazards, only risk reduction programs. Yet it is widely acknowledged that prevention is more efficient and effective than cure. Thus the best action is that which allows to prevent fires. In fire-prone areas of European countries during the dry summer months (such as Spain), there is always a public awareness campaign about the dangers of brush fires and the basic care that should be taken to reduce fire hazard (not throwing cigarette stubs on the ground in an open space, but actually ensuring it is securely extinguished, carefully put out any outdoor fire while camping by pouring water over it, not leaving any fire unattended, etc.) Eventually educational and public information campaigns are able to bear fruit because people's awareness has been raised and people act more conscientiously than before.

But two major differences are : one, that fire brigades are given means to shape the operating environment in which fires rage (equipment to alter topographic conditions or geographic conditions) unlike humanitarian aid which has little, if any sway over local conditions; and two, that there is no culture of prevention which stresses efficiency and cost-effectiveness of prevention activities within humanitarian aid, as if humanitarian aid was condemned to be an *ex post* activity.

Both of these aspects require a comprehensive approach to human vulnerability and an overruling concern to incorporate these key elements within the political equation if humanitarian aid is to do more than simply poor water over a fire. Just as fire brigades are able to alter the environment in a order to limit or minimize the extension of a fire (clearing all brushes and vegetation from a given area), until it can be controlled and finally extinguished, so should humanitarian aid be given greater means in order to fulfill its difficult mission. Rather than simply gap filling, humanitarian aid should form an integral part of a global and comprehensive policy, with clear and explicit means to fulfill its mission. And this is why humanitarian aid should be a integrated into humanitarian politics. Examples mentioned such as those of Somalia, Bosnia and the Great Lakes are but three where humanitarian aid has not been given the means to fill out its mission. Many demands are placed on humanitarian aid, but it has no tools to address the root causes of the problem or to avert crises and conflicts.

1.2. Development aid

The logical partner and ideal complement of humanitarian aid is development aid. But not just the single model, rigorous, macro-economic, industry oriented, private sector boosting and public sector castrating World Bank and IMF type of development, but the type of comprehensive human development found in the United Nations Human Development Reports (especially the 1997 pro-poor growth policy recommendations) or in the numerous and valuable United Nations Conferences which traditionally have placed human beings at the center of society and of our capacity for positive change, rather than prioritizing concepts such as economy, technology, "globalization" or some other impersonal entity which has no reality of its own. So it is not traditional development aid which must be pursued but rather new forms of development focusing on socioeconomic needs of individuals and communities. Or more simply said : human development must be placed anew as the center of government's policies.

Since it is not the objective of humanitarian aid to solve crises alone and much less to address its underlying causes, responsibility must be co-shared with other activities such as development aid. Several reasons explain this :

1) Development is a constant process of transformation; unlike humanitarian aid which is by definition temporary. Development subsists, even if maimed, after a crisis and exists, even if insufficiently or inadequately, before a crisis occurs;
2) Because crises are the result of failed development policies. If development players are unable to understand, analyze and correct past failures, there is little hope for future improvement;
3) As a process, development possesses long-term strategies and tools which it must use more effectively and efficiently in prevention activities to avert crises. As the United Nations recall : "crises seem to appear suddenly, but they are the result of failed development policies over years…..Emergency aid alone cannot solve the root causes"[181].
4) Development aid is much less spectacular than emergency assistance and thus less subject to media coverage. As such it hardly ever makes headlines news. At the same time it is less influenced media given its lower visibility. But planning requires a minimum of stability, which is the exception in emergency aid where needs and conditions rapidly change.
5) Development must go beyond the visible expression of distress into a more profound analysis of the underlying causes and their possible solution prior to a full blown crisis. And this requires a holistic and integrated analysis of human

[181] UNDP Human Development Report 1994, op. cit., p. 84

development as a starting point to identify human vulnerability and the corresponding human opportunity deficit.

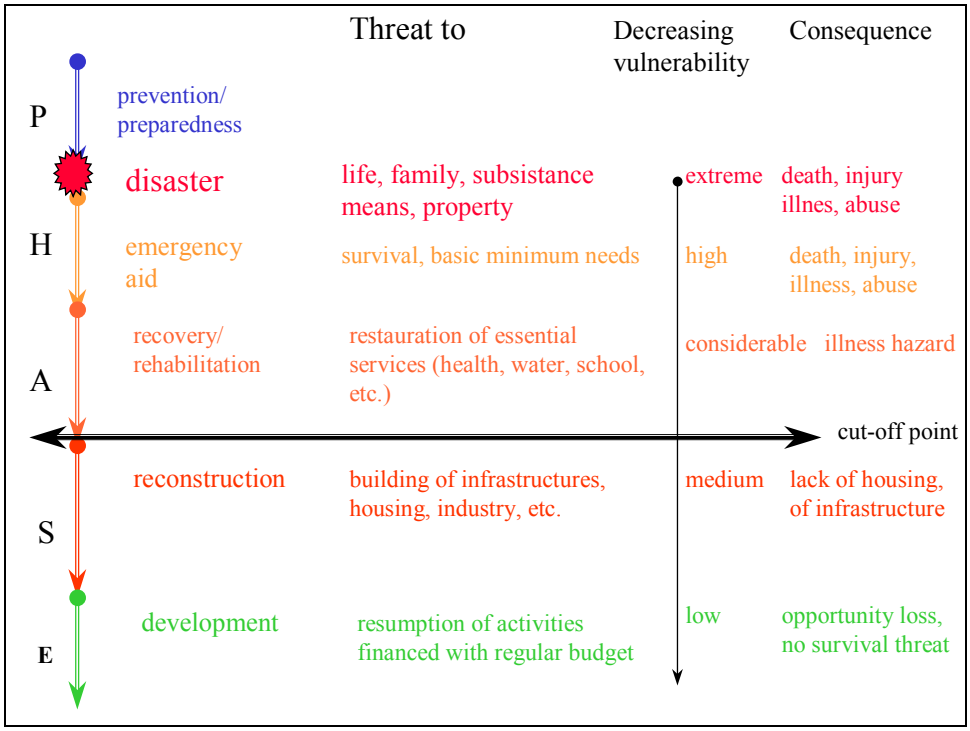
Because development requires a relatively stable environment in order to operate, it is a necessary complement to emergency assistance. The United Nations have tried to highlight the links between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development under headings such as continuum or contiguum. But there has been little practical applications of these concepts and theories, and the United Nations have failed to come up with a comprehensive framework and a holistic vision encompassing prevention and preparedness, emergency and subsequent phases into the development process. In fact, there is a methodological flaw in comparing relief and development, similar to that in assessing losses in natural disasters : accounting values for direct costs (lost production) as expressed by stock losses and indirect costs as expressed by flow losses within the economy (in addition to the secondary effects or impact on macroeconomics variables). So in fact even under the term "costs" we find two different value systems, one relating to stock losses and the other one to economic flows. The same happens with relief and development, where two different value systems with different objectives are compared.

Emergencies have traditionally been considered as something exceptional, defying analysis (the so-called "complex" emergencies) [182], instead of viewing crises as natural element of the development process as seen from a historical perspective. As such, it may have failed to integrate crises as preventable aspects of a normal development process. More than ever it is important for development to follow a holistic, comprehensive and meso-analytical approach to human vulnerability in order to address key issues and seek adequate responses. Development should also strive for a greater focus on social aspects of human beings and communities, rather than pursuing macroeconomic goals in which human and social aspects are hidden behind numbers, figures and quantifiable indicators. *What development really needs is planning with the heart, not only with the head.*

It has been said that humanitarian aid and development aid are different and complementary activities. But little attention has been given to the ambiguous nature of prevention activities in avoiding human losses, injuries and property destruction (cf. example in the previous chapter) given the opportunity that disasters may generate in financial and economic terms for the country (including the cancellation of part of a country's external debt).

Hereunder is a scheme meant to link the level of vulnerability (divided into five groups) with the consequences suffered by each vulnerable category as expressed by the level of losses. For each phase the type of threat and the immediate consequences are shown according to the vulnerability level. The threats are identified as a result of the objectives of each phase. The first column represents the phase of assistance, the second the types of threat, the third the level of vulnerability and the fourth the consequences according to the phase and the vulnerability level.

[182] see for example the explanation offered by A. Hallam in RRN No 7.



In this scheme it appears that the level of vulnerability is directly related to the level of losses. For the first two categories (extreme and high), the direct consequence of a disaster can be the death of an individual and that of family members. Unlike property destruction or loss of subsistence means, loss of life is something irreplaceable and invaluable. Second only in hardship are the numerous injuries, illnesses and abuses which can arise in a disaster situation and again place human life in jeopardy. In the considerable category, the lack of adequate recovery and rehabilitation measures can translate directly into health hazards (such as inadequate water supply and excreta disposal which may contribute to epidemics), thus again fomenting illnesses and placing human life at risk.
In the category of medium vulnerability are those activities which are undertaken as reconstruction efforts. While having a direct impact of the socio-economic structure and development opportunities of a country, lack of reconstruction will not place human lives at risk. The same applies to development activities, which while indispensable for the welfare of a country's population, do not immediately generate negative effects[183]. Thus the cut-off point between high and low vulnerability is found between rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. The criterion is thus direct risk exposure to human life. Although governments and donors may not necessarily accept such a division, it is quite a logical one from a humanitarian perspective, in which human beings are the center of human development. Human lives must thus be foremost protected to the highest possible level compatible with that of economic resources available.

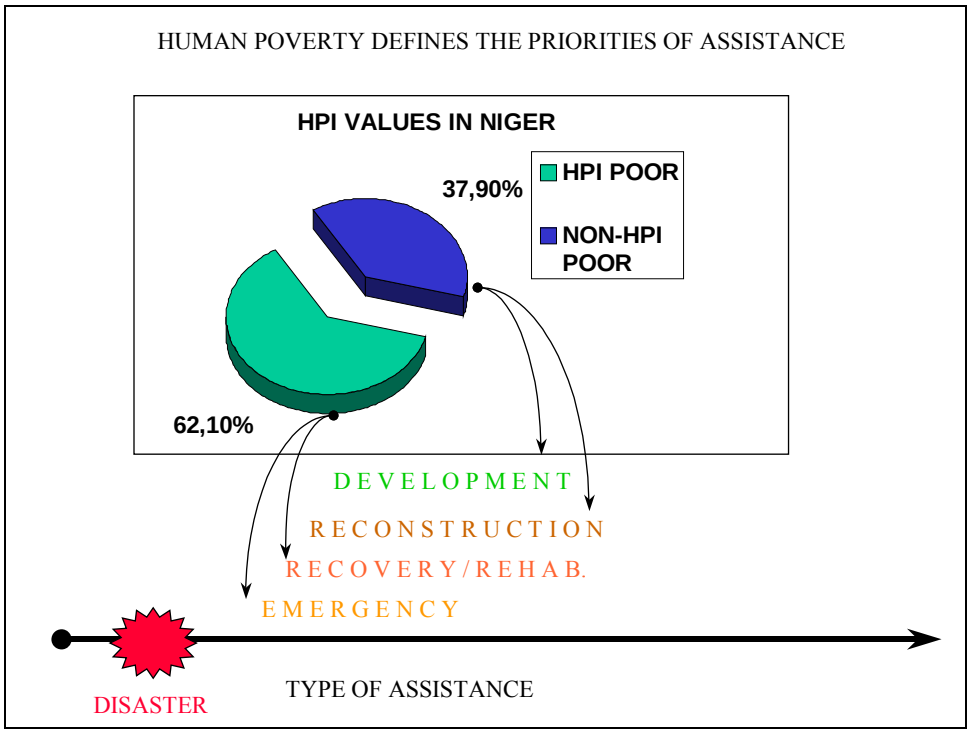
Human poverty ranks among the major factors of vulnerability. But as already explained, not merely economic poverty as expressed by GDP values, but according to the more comprehensive the United Nations Human Poverty Index presented in Chapter two. This index measures the degree of exclusion in a country, and the percentage expressed indicates the percentage of people in a country suffering from human deprivation. Monetary tools only have increasingly been discarded as a valid measure of poverty, since experts have found that an increase in revenues only is

[183] But continued inadequate development policies over time will lead to increased vulnerability

not sufficient to lower vulnerability and in some cases may even contribute to increase certain types of vulnerability.[184]

If human poverty is understood essentially as an opportunity-deficit, it follows that the least vulnerable will possess the highest opportunity level, allowing them to minimize their exposure to risk. This in turn means that the risk of death and dying is highest among the most vulnerable. For the least vulnerable, the main risks are material losses and opportunity loss. This means that the structure of the society where disaster strikes is of importance to understand the possible impact and consequences of a disaster.

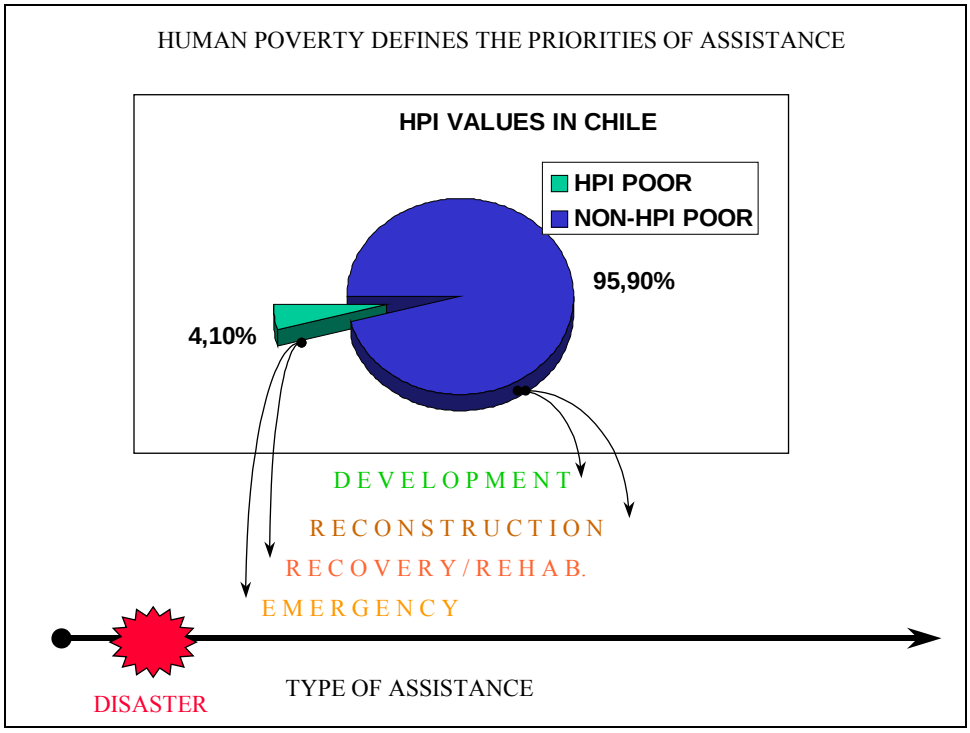
Using the 1998 UNDP Human Development Report data[185], the following two examples are meant to illustrate the above. In both cases these are considered as "developing" countries. Niger ranks last among the 77 countries of the developing countries HPI, while Chile ranks second on the same list.
While the data applies for an entire country, similarly HPI information can be collected for smaller communities, leading to a differentiated nationwide vision of human vulnerability.



In this case where almost two-thirds of the population suffers from human poverty, the essential caseload of assistance will focus on emergency and rehabilitation activities. It would be very partial to consider that only HPI poor will die in a disaster, since a low vulnerability does not confer immortality to anyone. Yet as a guiding principle, mortality, injuries, illnesses and abuses are highest among the most vulnerable. And because of their lack of opportunity and resources to reconstruct a stable and positive environment, they may remain longer than necessary in situation of dependency towards emergency and rehabilitation assistance (i.e. Somalia, Rwanda). Thus the structure of vulnerability in a society is likely to indicate the

[184] See didactic examples in "Auge, Caída y Levantada de Felipe Pinillo, Mecánico y Soldador", Gustavo Wilches-Chaux, LA RED/ITDG, Peru, 1998
[185] UNDP, Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1998, p. 29.

priorities in post-disaster assistance or in “complex” emergencies. Given the wide fluctuation in human poverty among developing countries another example from the opposite end yields quite different HPI values.



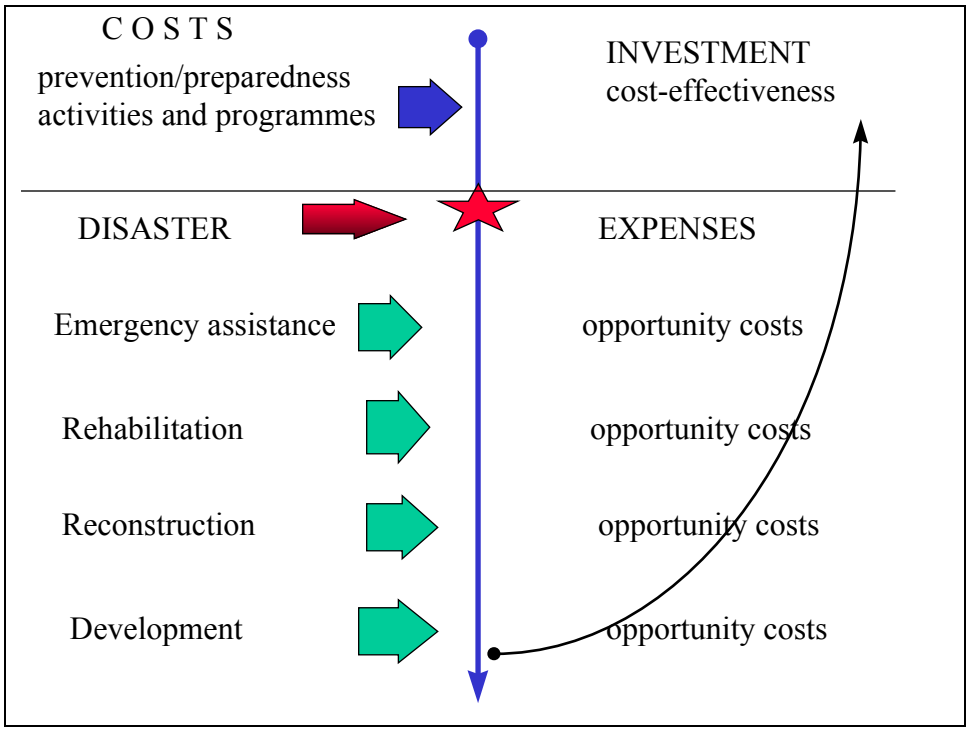
In this example the greatest caseload of post-disaster assistance will consist of development and reconstruction activities, once initial short-term emergency phase needs are covered (search and rescue, first aid, medical assistance, water, food and shelter).

Again these examples do not give any absolute values, but rather an indication as to the type of assistance most likely to be required by the population in regards to its composition (i.e. based on HPI values as cut-off point). This does not mean that in a national emergency in Chile 4,10% of the population will require emergency assistance and the other 95,9% will directly request reconstruction and development assistance. But the duration of emergency assistance to the great majority of the population will likely be very short-lived as compared to the 4,10% of HPI poor, who may remain dependent on emergency and rehabilitation assistance for a longer period of time.

These examples underline the relation between the social fabric of a society and its level of vulnerability and the type of post disaster assistance it may require. But again post-disaster response is only a second best. The ideal from a human perspective remains effective prevention, which is literally something in which a little money can go a long way.[186] Contrary to emergency assistance which is often costly and very visible, prevention can be quite cheap, but is quite difficult to sell. And yet it is the best possible investment in disaster reduction, preferable even to having a good insurance coverage : avoiding the trauma of property destruction, loss of livelihood and of housing, not to mention loss of life, is a certainly a worthwhile objective which should be pursued as far as possible to make it a reality. Early planning allows for timely and adequate activities instead of unprepared reactive

[186] See for example some of ECHO financed pilot micro-projects as part of the DIPECHO.

emergency-based actions which unfortunately continue to be the rule. Donors and governments prefer to pay more for disaster response (i.e. showing how the negative effects of disasters can be fought) than disaster reduction (prevention and preparedness, effective but not visible).



In the above example prevention and preparedness activities are considered as investments, rather than unproductive spending. This is justified because effective prevention reduces human toll and material damages. So far there is no economic study of the risk reduction factor associated with effective prevention, so that the return on the investment remains to be established. Nonetheless disasters generate many types of costs, some of which are analyzed through economic and macro-economic variables, others which affect the social fabric of society, the sum of which seriously affects the capacity of a country to undertake equitable and adequate human development policies. In economic terms, an investment in adequate prevention/preparedness programs would yield lower losses and translate into lower GNP and GDP percentage losses when disaster strikes.

Effective prevention is too important to be left to the hands of governments alone. A country's prevention policies must reflect civil society's importance given to disaster reduction. But it is also necessary for NGOs and United Nations agencies to inform in truth as to the results that prevention activities have obtained, as not all have been success stories and prevention has only recently become a focus of attention for most donors, governments and NGOs.

1.3 Merging humanitarian and development assistance : basis for humanitarian politics

The radically different concerns and means of implementation of each form of aid have given rise to a great chasm between humanitarian aid and development aid. Governments have taken advantage of these differences to try to manipulate both types of aid. But today the whole aid system is currently in crisis : the NATO March 1999 offensive on Yugoslavia has re-opened the debate on the utilization of

"humanitarian" terminology as an excuse for military action. Again what is being discussed is the "right of interference" on humanitarian grounds, while there remains a blatant political incapacity or unwillingness on behalf of governments to solve problems through negotiation rather than through the use of force. On the verge of the twenty first century, some do not hesitate to talk of a "New Global Order"[187] installed and directed by the United States as the sole international power with the will and means to uphold this leadership.

World geopolitics profoundly affect the aid system. So much so that it may no longer make any sense to continue with the traditional aid forms. Perhaps the basic question in rethinking the aid system is : should we acknowledge that governments hold an unchallenged mandate from their electorate for managing and using the aid system (both humanitarian and development aid) to suit the interests of their foreign policy? While not all countries tie their aid programs so closely to their foreign policy interests[188], the United States clearly does, and publicly acknowledges it.

In our prosperous democratic societies, we have a right to demand that our governments follow people-supported policies. The State is no longer the representation of the higher good, this entity which was supposed to lead humanity on the path to wisdom, as in the ancient Greek model. Indeed during the Classical period the State was the enlightened organization which took all its decisions reportedly for the common good and well being of all its citizens. In today's world of global economies, governments have seen their margin for action reduced on two counts : one because of the loss of sovereignty that the creation of regional organizations entail (CIS, EU, SICA, etc.) and the trend to continue globalization on the basis of competitive poles of expansion (the Americas, led by the US, are already looking at the post-NAFTA phase to create a single American economy for the entire continent, the UE is seeking to do the same in Europe and is flirting with Mercosur for an eventual trade free agreement between the two blocks, but run into in a number of internal problems due to the lack of agreement on a common foreign policy, and the Japanese who have dominated Asian economies are striving to create a large Asian free trade bloc trough ASEAN). The second and perhaps more important factor is the power of the previously labeled "multinational" firms, which are more adequately called transnational firms in the sense that their capital flows freely across nations and national boundaries.[189] These corporations are literally empires, and their volume of sales is often superior to the GDP of entire nations, and not only developing nations. As an example the following (part of a) table is drawn from the 1997 UNDP Human Development Report, comparing State and Corporate power, 1994 year (in billions of US Dollars)[190]:

COUNTRY OR CORPATION	TOTAL GDP OR CORPORATE SALES
Indonesia	174.6
General Motors	*168.8*
Turkey	149.8
Denmark	146.1
Ford	*137.1*
South Africa	123.3
Toyota	*111.1*

[187] Ignacio Ramonet, article "Nouvel ordre global", Le Monde Diplomatique, June 1999
[188] for a valuation of donor performance, see DAC membership reviews.
[189] The term "multinational" seems to indicate that a number of different nationalities are represented in the capital of these firms, which is not the case. The term transnational is more appropriate.
[190] UNDP, op. cit., table 4.1., p. 92

Exxon	*110.0*
Royal Dutch/Shell	*109.8*
Norway	109.6
Poland	92.8
Portugal	91.6
IBM	*72.0*
top five corporations	*871.4*
Least developed countries	76.5
South Asia	451.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	246.8

The contents of the table give an indication of where the true centers of economic decision lay. Indeed articles have been published such as "towards a planetary government of multinational corporations - two hundred corporations which control the world"[191], which underline the dangers of a global economy and stresses the need for a balance of power worldwide, and finally give a critical vision of the almost unchallenged assumption that global is beautiful.[192]

And yet the previous comparison only considers the volume of sales of transnational companies. One aspect which is equally critical is not only the amount of corporate sales of the giant transnational companies *but their value in terms of market capitalization*. Although market values fluctuate sometimes significantly, market capitalization gives a good indication of a company's worth, in addition to being directly related to its indebtedness capacity and credit ratio. To take a recent example from the July 9, 1999 Financial Times Eurotop 300[193], the total market capitalization of the 49 banks listed in the Eurotop amount to 980.9 billion of Euros (or 1,020 billions us dollars)[194], the total of the 21 telecommunications companies to 668 billion of Euros (or 694 billion us dollars), the fifteen insurance and the nine life insurance companies together amount to 505.6 billion Euros (or 525.8 billions us dollars). The total of only these 94 companies already represent a market capitalization of 2,154.5 billion Euros (2,240 billion us dollars), almost all of Germany's 1995 GDP of 2,252 billion us dollars[195]. There is increasing evidence that globalization will accelerate the ongoing trend of concentration of economic power into fewer but more powerful hands to the detriment of our democratic choices and our government's margin of maneuver.

What choices for our savings? The get rich schemes

Very schematically and roughly there has been traditionally two different ways for people to make some extra money (each with hundreds of possible products and derivatives in which to invest) : those instruments which are based on interest rates and those based on market values. During the eighties under the Reagan administration interest rates were quite high, and not only in the United States. The economic policies entailed a relatively high inflation rate, but the real interest rate

[191] F. Clairmont, "Vers un gouvernement planétaire des multinationales - Ces deux cents sociétés qui contrôlent le monde", Le Monde Diplomatique, Avril 1997. According to this article the combined 1995 sales volume of these transnational companies was 7,850 billion US Dollars as compared to a world GDP of 25,223 billion US Dollars, amounting to almost a third of the world's GDP!

[192] See a selection of articles from the CD "Le Monde Diplomatique 1984-1998" on the issue.

[193] Financial Times, July 9, 1999, page 27.

[194] At the rate of 1.04 us dollar for 1 Euro (€)

[195] UNDP Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1998, op. cit., p. 226.

(nominal rate minus inflation) on deposits and monetary instruments made them quite attractive to those who had some money saved (while causing a serious strain on the budget given the huge sums allocated to financing the US debt). But these instruments were quite secure, with practically no risk of defaulting on interest payments (especially government T-bills) unless the government itself went bankrupt. The other type of investment, with a greater risk but potentially higher returns, was stock shares. The stock value of a company being theoretically set by market forces of supply and demand, it was normally a sound investment to buy stock from a reputable company and await the dividend payments as profit distribution to the shareholders. As long as companies performed according to expectations, share prices would follow an upward trend, with its inevitable corrections and plunges according to the conjuncture (in other words, the so-called "normal" market fluctuations). The word was that sharp drops were only temporary and long term charts demonstrated stocks to be sound investments. So the choice was up to the investor : take a safe, hassle-free investment in monetary instruments, or a potentially higher reward in stock shares, but with a greater levels of uncertainty, and accepting the risk of a loss.

Today interest rates are at their lowest level in years. In some countries real interest rates on current accounts are even negative (Switzerland, Japan, Spain) meaning that any money kept in monetary form will yield a negative return (e.g. that is to say that money is actually depreciating, or losing value). As a result the *only* attractive alternative is investing in the stock market. But today's markets have no longer any similarities with those theoretical markets studied at university. In the real world global markets are defined by speculation and not by production factors any longer[196]. It matters little that a product is good or bad, that is ecological or potentially harmful for human consumption, such as genetically manipulated foods : it only matters that the company will be able to make a profit from it. Share prices thus reflect the expected earnings of a company, and earnings become the single criterion on which share prices are set and transactions are performed. For share prices to increase, profits have to increase as well in what becomes an unstoppable movement of growth to which companies are condemned under the risk of having share prices plunge, consequently with the inevitable buy-out from a competitor. These high stake global markets do offer a very risky but potentially very rewarding investment given their enormous volatility. Day traders are able to make substantial profits on not uncommon five percent daily fluctuation bands.[197]

In the world of global competition, soaring stock shares (the DOW Jones Index has gone from 9,000 in January to 11,000 in May of 1999) offers an excellent opportunity for the transnational companies to increase their economic power. While private investors may make some profit, the real winners are transnational companies, which see their market capitalization value place them well above any threat of buy-out, absorption or other hostile bid from competitor. At the same time their increased market value allows them to obtain additional financing for their expansion, mergers and acquisitions. This circle of continuous profits and economic growth is extremely dangerous and may yet cause a crash much more damaging than the 1987 crash as financial places and economies have considerably increased their level of interconnection and interdependence. A domino effect from a Wall street crash could well oblige the world to think of a new model of economic system in which

[196] Estimates for amounts spent on speculation and financial transactions are about fifty times superior to those spent in real economy -in production goods and services. See Ignacio Ramonet, "Un mundo sin rumbo", op. cit., p. 80.

[197] These people actually make a living from day to day speculation. Their positions are normally always evened out before the market's daily close.

redistribution of wealth will have to be an integral part of the economic theory, and not a negligible element which no one cares to be concerned with. The reportedly too-costly European welfare model is now being attacked from all sides as transnational companies are able to turn legislation to their advantage, having acquired the support of governments of all the rich countries. While profits and markets rise geometrically, nations GDP's and workers' wages rise arithmetically (if at all in some cases). The Malthusian theory of unsustainable growth revised and adapted to the new era. In today's world, capital and speculation have replaced population growth, while wages and GDP have replaced production and subsistence factors. But the potentially catastrophic prediction remains if we are not capable of finding a more equitable path for growth.

Which world for tomorrow?

In this context there is little room for indecision and patience. Things will not improve by themselves, as governments see their power shrink in favor transnational companies which have little interest outside shareholder's satisfaction and profits.
On the brink of the new millennium, only an active mobilization of civil society in all countries may be able to reverse a trend which has been able to impose itself as an ideal model of growth. Yet few people are aware of the dangers which hide behind a global world, and there is a limited access to disseminating the information through independent sources, since the media (press, radio and television) are for the greater part in the hands of those same transnational corporations which hold the economic power. By chance, there still remains a few valuable, independent and professional means of information which are able to give us a critical analysis of the situation rather than merely lending its means to propaganda and misinformation. And a growing number of concerned citizens who are forming associations and networks to challenge the assumption that transnational companies, financial speculators and governments are able to manipulate the public to suit their agenda as needed.

But we must not fall into the other extreme, and consider transnational companies only as mortal enemies and initiate a witch hunt. The same as our governments, transnational corporations need to be educated. In this as consumers we have our say, and we must utilize the simple market laws to our advantage. This means that our consumption must be politically oriented, rather than directed by media advertising to which we are being constantly exposed. We must learn conscientious shopping habits in which prices are only one, but by no means not the major element which guides our consumption. We must resist the trend to buy what is advertised on television and become better consumers. In short, we must start demanding products which really reflect our desires and are not merely the effect of expensive advertising. Human beings are not mindless sheep which can be steered in the interest of international capital and finance. It is high time to stop merely complaining about the situation as passive observers and start acting according to what our mind and conscience tells us. Human beings are not *homo oeconomicus,* a simplistic model of primitive consumption guided by elementary criteria in which "more" is always better and "cheaper" always preferable. In this theoretical world of perfect consumers there is no room for needs or desires which cannot be met by market forces, as a result of supply and demand. This is the kind of model that transnational companies would like to foment worldwide, with the support of governments (following the common saying that "if you can't beat them, join them", which is just what almost all governments are doing). What a great step for humanity that across all continents in our planet, a number of human beings are able to consume the same product : a wonderful and entirely artificial drink made up of carbonated water,

sugars, caffeine, artificial flavors, colorings and preservatives marketed under the brand name of Coca-cola!. Notwithstanding its absolute lack of any nutritional value, it would hardly matter if such a drink did not exist : except for its stockholders. And this is but one among literally thousands of products which hardly can be said to improve our quality of life, and yet are being consumed massively worldwide. While it is not my objective to write a consumer education manual, it must always be remembered that our only real choice as consumers is the decision to purchase a product. We can all become much more selective consumers and send the message to transnational corporations as to what kind of goods *we* want rather than being a publicity driven consumer society.
But this marks the transformation of consumers into politically aware citizens. A difficult challenge in our societies in which a majority of people have little concern over public affairs and where voter's turnout percentage are at times under the fifty percent mark which represents the majority.[198] But public mobilization must start somewhere, and demand-led consuming patterns should start offsetting the current widespread supply-side economics applied worldwide by the transnational companies.

Who holds the power?

Schematically centers of power can thus be divided into three rough categories :
the first and most powerful group is that of private companies, chief among which the transnational corporations and the financial speculators, which are the uncontested center of worldwide economic power, hidden behind the impersonal entity called "the market";

the second is made up of the world's governments, which have gradually lost control of their domestic economic policy as the liberal model of a global economy has extended almost worldwide. Weakened by the growing power of transnational corporations, threatened by financial speculators and the extension of regional political blocs (such as the EU), governments can only extend their authority over yet another category : its citizens.
In the words of a French syndicate representative : "Political powers are only, in the best of cases, subcontracted by companies. The market rules. The government manages."[199] An example of the extremely limited weight of governments can be shown by the level of foreign exchange reserves, which in 1995 amounted to 1,410 trillion us dollars worldwide, when daily foreign exchange turnover in the world's markets amounted to 1,300 trillion us dollars.[200]

The third group is civil society, which includes all the citizens of a nation. Civil society is very unequally organized : some participate through political parties, church groups, NGOs or other associations or organizations. A substantial group of citizens does not participate at all and remains content without taking a proactive participation in society, considering that others should do the job ("that is the politician's job", they say) not realizing that our only chance to improve our model of society is to collectively make our demands known to governments and transnational corporations, and not to give them a blank check for running world affairs as if citizens' consent and support was no longer necessary. We need a better balance of power between civil society, governments and transnational corporations. We cannot

[198] Voters' participation in the latest elections were reportedly 42% for Switzerland, and an average of 49% in the United States during the eighties. UNDP Rapport Mondial …1998, op. cit., p.215.
[199] I. Ramonet, "Un mundo sin rumbo", op. cit., p. 74. Note that in Spanish "un billón" is equivalent to one million millions, or one trillion and is thus not equal to the English billion
[200] Ibidem, p. 78

agree with the current "economicist", unique and unchallenged vision of world geopolitics as established by the international capital, when it is being done at the expense of essential humanitarian values and is causing ever more social exclusion worldwide.

The first three weeks of August 1999 have seen an incredible number of large scale buy-outs, mergers and acquisitions, amounting to 20,000 billion pesetas, or more than 129 billion US$, as compared to a total of 64,000 billion pesetas for the first six months of 1999 (or 412 billion US$)[201]. The global economy is here to stay : from 1996 to 1998 the amount of international mergers and acquisition valued at over US$ 3 million has increased four-fold[202], in the midst of rising stock shares. The other side of the coin is much less brilliant. Mergers and acquisitions tend to have a negative effect on employment level. As a result, in the United States alone almost 46,000 jobs were lost, primarily in the banking sector, according to a study from Challenger, Gray and Christmas.[203]. But the trend appears unstoppable.

It would seem that we are condemned to abide by the laws of the New Global Order, and its global market corollary, the new gods of the twenty first century. This new system is characterized by a liberal economy which favors multinational corporations and financial speculators in detriment of people. Another specific aspect is the widening gap between rich and poor countries, which shows that the "invisible hand" does nothing to correct inequalities and is void of any humanistic concerns. In a recent alarm cry, the UN Secretary General asked for a more generous response from the rich countries : of the US$ 796 million pledged by donors for humanitarian aid this year, only 352 have been actually disbursed so far[204]. The ODA to GDP percentage has dropped from 0.33% of GDP in 1990 for the twenty one richest countries to a meager 0.22% of GDP in 1997, far from the recommended 0.7% set as a seemingly equitable objective . In comparison in the past three years financial markets in Europe and the United States have obtained a 70% increase[205]. 90% of the mergers and acquisitions happen between companies in industrial countries, whereby the direct investment flow to developing countries has shrunk 4% in 1998 as compared to 1997.[206]In geopolitical terms, the overall dominance of US policies worldwide have firmly established the US as the sole world leader. In economic and social terms, concentration of richness and capital into the hands of a selected few with increasing selfishness and social exclusion are some of the visible effects of this New Global Order. In front of this new structure of power, should we remain passive observers while the choice of our society, lifestyle, traditions and even governments are being largely decided without us? How much more are we willing to accept, as accomplices to a perverse system which makes us believe that money is the most -if not the only- valuable thing in the world?

A growing number of as of yet very dispersed citizens are openly criticizing the New Global Order with many proposals and aspects which are clearly inspired by humanitarian values and not dictated by market mechanism and simplistic economic theories. The problem is that no global coalition has been formed to challenge the assumptions and mechanisms of this New Global Order. Yet there are a number of initiatives and proposals which have been taken in many countries. But in order to

[201] EL PAÍS, Negocios, article "Fusiones de verano", p. 1, 22 August 1999
[202] Ibidem
[203] Ibidem, p. 6
[204] EL PAÍS, article "los países más ricos recortan su ayuda al Tercer Mundo", p. 1 and 19, 14 August 1999.
[205] Ibidem, p. 19
[206] EL PAÍS, Negocios, op. cit., p. 6

succeed there must be a greater social mobilization in support of those initiatives, and they should be linked under a single umbrella.

Among some examples one could cite the creation of ATTAC (Association pour une Taxation des Transactions financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens)[207], inspired from an article from Ignacio Ramonet in Le Monde Diplomatique in December 1997, or among politicians in Spain the virtual forum "Europa Verde y solidaria" created by Eurodeputy Jose María Mendulice (*inter alia* former UNHCR head of operations in the ex-Yugoslavia)[208], the political moves of EU Commissioner Emma Bonino both in Italy and at European level[209], of Daniel Cohn-Bendit in France, etc. These are merely a few examples of the growing number of concerned citizens which, to some degree or other, are contesting this New Global Order to ensure that humanitarian values are simply not forgotten. The price of inaction is a global society in which human beings are subject to an economic dictatorship which ultimately only serves the interests of a few.

The economy must be at the service of people, for their well being and development. Not the other way around. Today we are slaves to an economic system which even our governments are powerless to change, much less control, when they do not directly support it. The illusion of democracy which remains in our right of vote is the last remnant of popular sovereignty. But real decisions are largely taken without popular consent, allegedly for our own good. The mad cow's disease which affected the human food chain (called ther Jacobs-Kreutzfeld syndrome) or the more recent dioxin intoxication in Belgium initially on Coca-cola cans, later spreading to other foodstuffs, (and which proved instrumental in changing the government in the June 1999 elections) shows clearly that governments are more concerned about the effects on trade, national accounts and macroeconomics variables than about the threat to human safety and health. Not to mention the HIV contaminated blood in France which caused extension of HIV cases through the blood bank chain. All these examples show that governments give little attention to people's concerns and aspirations, while listening attentively to corporation leaders and financial gurus.

Despite the odds, the fight to replace human beings as the center of society must be undertaken, with the corresponding pressures on governments. For all its good, economic growth alone has clearly shown to be insufficient to enable sustainable development. We must strive to replace the economy where it belongs : as subservient to people's welfare, and not as an imposition on our social system. That governments give greater attention to the inflation rate, or GDP growth rate, or interest rate, than to social indicators is a sign that our society needs urgently a value system based on human beings. Not on money or economic aggregates. Solidarity, one of the pillars of humanitarian politics, must be applied both at country level and outside its border, making an integral part of foreign policy decisions, through adequate humanitarian and development aid.
We need to identify objectives for the common good which are felt with the heart. Not the wallet.

The application of liberal economic policies worldwide which fail to integrate social and human development problems have shown to increase the degree of exclusion

[207] founded in France in June 1998 around a specific idea (taxing of international capital flows), ATTAC associations are spreading to several countries (Brazil, Switzerland, Belgium, Canada - Quebec- Senegal, etc.)
[208] http://forma.uoc.es/ideograma/b/materials/portadavisitant/prehome.htm
[209] see *inter alia* Mrs. Bonino's speech "A European Agenda for the 21st Century", at the Global Refugee Crisis Conference, Brussels, 20 May 1999

and increase the gap between rich and poor in the same country. Obviously the market is unable to intervene in anything which is not a marketable good, or salable commodity or service. But we have seen that human life is one of the things which cannot be priced by the market. Many social and human concerns are equally not marketable. So regulations are necessary to correct the system's incorrect functioning. Because there are things more important than money. Liberal policies *need* to have social safety nets build-in. And only governments, through voters' pressures and lobbying, are able to pass legislation which can remedy the market's shortfalls. Again if solidarity is an essential element of humanitarian values, and to paraphrase Martine Aubry, it follows that a government be willing to correct basic inequalities in order to give to every individual equal opportunities, thus allowing every individual one day to "become a winner" [210].

The other side of the coin is obviously that even if humanitarian values and human development should become primary objectives of governments, economics cannot be simply left aside. Humanitarian politics cannot simply exclude or leave aside economic considerations, unlike the market which simply ignores social or human non marketable needs. This justifies the need for an economic rationalization of governments' budgets along different budget lines, minimizing unproductive expenses (defense and military) in favor of productive and social investment (education, research, health, etc.), all of which contribute to higher human development.

Some strategies for tomorrow

To be able to counter the gigantic forces of transnational corporations, financial speculators and the complacency of governments, we must become organized under a very large global coalition. The same as economy has gone global, so must citizens' concerns. But how can this be accomplished? There are numerous means at our disposal, all of which require some dedication and efforts. We will not have something for nothing. But as a starting point, and in order to preserve the specificity of each nation's citizens and give them greater political power, an initial step is the creation of

1) a humanitarian party.

Even if traditional party structures are largely obsolete and a growing number of citizens are increasingly disappointed with the existing parties and the lack of alternatives, the creation of a humanitarian party in every country possible already establishes two precepts :

a) that a number of voters support the party, i.e. it is a legitimate representative of people's choice (the lack of legitimacy is one of the arguments used to criticize NGOs);
b) that humanitarian values are important enough to create a political party willing to defend them, in which human development, rather than economic parameters, is the primary objective.

To be successful such a party must also count with the support of all humanitarian organizations and NGOs. The humanitarian party should establish a chart laying the foundations of the party with clear objectives. Indeed a number of articles from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights should certainly be included.
The humanitarian party should receive the support of all progressive political parties actually existing.

[210] Martine Aubry, "Il est grand temps", Albin Michel, 1998, p. 50.

2) a *national and international humanitarian network* should be created to inform, disseminate and identify forms of collective action. The network should also function *as an alternative source of independent information*. Because of the importance that media coverage plays today in fomenting public opinion positions, it is necessary to give an unbiased, unspectacular and professional coverage of situations and countries where aid funds are being used. A monthly report should be established, notwithstanding specific reports as the case may be.

In relation to the humanitarian party, the network could be used to coordinate regional and national events at national level. At international level, the network would serve to ensure consistency and coherence (ensuring common positions on issues) of humanitarian parties worldwide. An essential aspect should be the transparency of information and accountability to the public. An ethic code should be incorporated and applied by all humanitarian politicians to lend greater credibility to the party. Unlike all other parties where electoral promises are not legally binding and are used for electoral purposes only (who doesn't have in mind at least one example of unfulfilled political promise made during an election campaign?), humanitarian politicians should be held to their word and program. And judged accordingly by their electorate.

The application of a humanitarian agenda requires identifying specific issues and a political pressure campaign on governments. Among the initial measures which should be urgently undertaken two are of special interest in terms of international equity and human development and are directly related to the current aid system.

3) the restructuring of the United Nations system. As a first priority the UN Security Council members should be equitably selected by virtue of their demographic weight and not their nuclear capacity : in practice this would mean that only China and the United States would retain their seat at the five-member Security Council. The other three members would be India, Indonesia and Brazil[211]. Obviously the actual members would veto this proposal. Currently quite discreet negotiations are being undertaken regarding an increase of Security Council members, but criteria remain obscure. On the one hand economic titans such as Japan or Germany are expected to obtain a permanent seat, while other countries such as Brasil or Argentina for the Americas, and Nigeria for Africa, are also expected to be potential candidates. In short, it would appear that the new Security Council will remain unbalanced and give greater importance to military and economic capacity over demographic values. Yet the concept of one person, one vote is the basis of a democratic system. If the United Nations must play a role of world leader, its policies must be made by a majority of the world population, and not by hand-picked military or economic powers. Humanitarian politicians must lobby for a more equitable participation in the Security Council on the basis of country's demographic weight. The actual five members represent 1,751 million people as compared to a world population of 5,627 million, or less than a third of the world population (31.1%).[212] If the five most populous countries were to become permanent members of the Security Council, the population represented would rise to 2,772 million, or almost 50% of the world population (i.e. 49.26% for China, India, USA, Indonesia and Brasil).

But reformulating a Security Council is not enough. The UN system must be entirely reviewed. The actual international financial institutions are not only accomplices of

[211] Based on 1995 population figures. Cf. UNDP Rapport Mondial…1998, op. cit., p. 197 and 221.
[212] Ibidem.

extending the neoliberal economic rules worldwide at tremendous social costs, fomenting the too famous "hunger riots" in a number of countries where subsidies to basic foodstuffs had been lifted as a result of the SAP and SAF. The IMF and the World Bank are the first organizations which needs a profound restructuring to include and value social aspects instead of only focusing on macroeconomics.
Other authors have argued enough over the dubious advantage of being and IMF and World Bank fund recipient. Perhaps one of the most striking and recent examples has to do with the financial crisis in Brazil in January 1999 or the current situation in Russia[213]. These are just two examples of what neoliberal economic policies are able to accomplish when social factors are overlooked.

Humanitarian politicians must lobby to replace the actual financial institutions with new, more flexible models which do not seek to impose their rigid framework worldwide in the name of globalization, but which understand that social stability and human development have a price which must be paid, even if it means lower economic growth or higher government spending. The objective of international financial assistance should be to promote growth and development of developing countries, rather than chaining them tightly by the neck into rigid credits from which they are unable to free themselves. If international financial institutions remain a tool of capitalist expansion and international pilferage of developing countries' resources, fomenting widespread social exclusion within the country, it is time for them to change. The humanitarian parties should have this as one of their objectives.

The other restructuring of the UN system has to do with the agencies which operate in humanitarian and development aid. With few exceptions, such as UNHCR because of its peculiar mandate, UN agencies are acting more as competitors than as complement to NGOS and the Red Cross. There is a need for a comprehensive, integrated structure flexible enough to include both humanitarian aid and development within a single, clear center of decision, coordination and information for all United Nations, instead of having a multiplicity of agencies which at times compete even among themselves.

In the world of NGOs and the Red Cross, there is also an urgent necessity to come together under a common umbrella. The crisis of the entire aid system equally affects NGOs and the Red Cross. In order to enhance credibility and effectiveness of activities undertaken, the NGOs and Red Cross members should come together under the umbrella of

4) an *international non-governmental federation (INGF).* Umbrella organizations already exist (VOICE, ICVA, Interaction, etc.) but so far they are limited to countries or regions and do not yet hold wide international support. Some associations, such as the DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee) in the UK, act as an umbrella charitable organization which launches and coordinates a National Appeal in the UK in response to a major disaster overseas, "bringing together a unique alliance of aid, corporate, public and broadcasting services to rally compassion and ensure that funds raised go to those amongst the fifteen member aid agencies best placed to bring effective and timely relief."[214].An International Non-Governmental Federation regrouping as many countries as possible and as many NGOs as possible from each country should be created as a unified counterpart to donors and United Nations organizations, possibly sharing the DEC's model.

[213] See articles "Recolonisation programmée au Brésil", by M. Chossudovsky, and "La Russie au bord de l'abîme", by F. Clairmont, both in "Le Monde Diplomatique", March 1999, p. 18-20.
[214] Http://www.dec.org.uk

This INGF would possess its own chart, code of conduct, objectives and means of operations, including its own evaluation cell for humanitarian and development aid.
A sort of pool of resource persons from the INGF members should be formed and financed by the integrating NGOs. The idea would be to ensure a complete and comprehensive evaluation of operations through the use of common resources (i.e. sharing human and material resources). This would allow for comprehensive aid evaluations (meso-analytical holistic vision with an integrated approach) to be undertaken from the perspective of beneficiaries rather than traditional donor-driven evaluations focusing on accountability and performance. The INGF would also create an ethical chart and a rotating permanent committee of members to whom intra-NGO problems would be brought for resolution[215].

5) Targeting a key figure in each major donor and financial institution

Institutions, like markets, are impersonal entities. Thus they do not think or change. It is people who make the difference. Among the UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross, success of operations is foremost a question of having motivated, experienced and qualified staff. As such humanitarian parties, with the support of the INGF, should identify one key individual in each donor and financial institution who is likely to be receptive to and understand humanitarian objectives. After duly providing this person with complete and adequate information, the person should become the representative, within its own organization, of humanitarian organizations and objectives, in order to gradually "win over" institutions to the humanitarian cause. This may include training and dissemination sessions for the staff's institution and maintaining regular contacts.

6) To use humanitarian politics objectives as guiding principles for building a culture of prevention

To instate a culture of prevention worldwide and move as far as possible away from reactive interventions it is necessary to invest much more in adequate prevention means and tools. The United Nations preventive diplomacy era seems to be over as the United States has usurped global leadership in virtually all aspects of international relations. It is time to rethink about negotiating and investing in crises prevention schemes, rather than to remain bound in a role of post-disaster assistance. This is an integral and fundamental part of any economic rationalization program which seeks to devote maximum resources for human development rather than financing expensive and unsustainable emergency operations. Effective prevention lowers emergency, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs, freeing resources which would otherwise be used for post-disaster mitigation. This requires a substantial change of focus in the way international relations and diplomacy are being done . Moving away from the "carrot and stick" traditional model into much more persuasive and cooperative efforts towards a compromise which allows disasters to be averted, but by placing human concerns over specific economic, strategic or political interests or the advantages that are to be gained from such cooperative agreements (i.e. limited and improved use of conditionality). In the case of natural disasters, the links with man-made disasters should be established, and in particular some of the lessons learned in natural disasters should be used by conflict prevention researchers. The capacity to pre-empt crises is still a major issue on which very little success has been achieved. And from a humanitarian perspective it

[215] an NGO Ombudsman project is currently under study but it is apparently encountering a number of difficulties due to the lack of agreement on its real decision power.

is likely the single most important aspect to which due attention should be given. Foremost by humanitarian politics.

These are but a few of the ideas which could contribute to a new, albeit idealistic, vision of governance and assistance based foremost on human beings. But institutions and movements do not change until people demand a change. And the time for a change is now, in order to attempt a peaceful transition to a more equitable and humane society, before a global crisis in a global world occurs.

Annex 1 The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

Purpose

This Code of Conduct seeks to guard our standards of behaviour. It is not about operational details, such as how one should calculate food rations or set up a refugee camp. Rather, it seeks to maintain the high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact to which disaster response NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement aspires. It is a voluntary code, enforced by the will of organization accepting it to maintain the standards laid down in the Code.

In the event of armed conflict, the present Code of Conduct will be interpreted and applied in conformity with international humanitarian law.

The Code of Conduct is presented first. Attached to it are three annexes, describing the working environment that we would like to see created by Host Governments, Donor Governments and Intergovernmental Organizations in order to facilitate the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Definitions

NGOs: NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) refers here to organizations, both national and international, which are constituted separate from the government of the country in which they are founded.

NGHAs: For the purposes of this text, the term Non Governmental Humanitarian Agencies (NGHAs) has been coined to encompass the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement - The International Committee of the Red Cross, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member National Societies - and the NGOs as defined above. This code refers specifically to those NGHAs who are involved in disaster response.

IGOs: IGOs (Inter-Governmental Organizations) refers to organizations constituted by two or more governments. It thus includes all United Nations Agencies and regional organizations.

Disasters: A disaster is a calamitous event resulting in loss of life, great human suffering and distress, and large scale material damage.

The Code of Conduct

Principles of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

1. The Humanitarian imperative comes first

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. As members of the international community, we recognize our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations, is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility. The prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster. When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone

Wherever possible, we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs. Within the entirety of our programmes, we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate. In implementing this approach, we recognize the crucial role played by women in disaster-prone communities and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our aid programmes. The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy, can only be effective if we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for such equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.

3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint

Humanitarian aid will be given according to the need of individuals, families and communities. Not withstanding the right of NGHAs to espouse particular political or religious opinions, we affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions. We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.

4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy

NGHAs are agencies which act independently from governments. We therefore formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government, except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy. We will never knowingly - or through negligence - allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments. We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor. We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by concerned individuals to support our work and recognize the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

5. We shall respect culture and custom

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities

All people and communities - even in disaster - possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local NGHAs as partners in planning and implementation, and co-operate with local government structures where appropriate. We will place a high priority on the proper co-ordination of our emergency responses. This is best done within the countries concerned by those most directly involved in the relief operations, and should include representatives of the relevant UN bodies.

7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid

Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.

8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs

All relief actions affect the prospects for long term development, either in a positive or a negative fashion. Recognizing this, we will strive to implement relief programmes which actively reduce the beneficiaries' vulnerability to future disasters and help create sustainable lifestyles. We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. We will also endeavour to minimize the negative impact of humanitarian assistance, seeking to avoid long-term beneficiary dependence upon external aid.

9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.

We often act as an institutional link in the partnership between those who wish to assist and those who need assistance during disasters. We therefore hold ourselves accountable to both constituencies. All our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency. We recognize the need to report on our activities, both from a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness. We recognize the obligation to ensure appropriate monitoring of aid distributions and to carry out regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance. We will also seek to report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact. Our programmes will be based upon high standards of professionalism and expertise in order to minimize the wasting of valuable resources.

10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects

Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will cooperate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximizing
overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.

The Working Environment

Having agreed unilaterally to strive to abide by the Code laid out above, we present below some indicative guidelines which describe the working environment we would like to see created by donor governments, host governments and the inter-governmental organisations - principally the agencies of the United Nations - in order to facilitate the effective participation of NGHAs in disaster response.

These guidelines are presented for guidance. They are not legally binding, nor do we expect governments and IGOs to indicate their acceptance of the guidelines through the signature of any document, although this may be a goal to work to in the future. They are presented in a spirit of openness and cooperation so that our partners will become aware of the ideal relationship we would seek with them.

Annex I : Recommendations to the governments of disaster affected countries

1. Governments should recognize and respect the independent, humanitarian and impartial actions of NGHAs . NGHAs are independent, bodies. This independence and impartiality should be respected by host governments.

2. Host governments should facilitate rapid access to disaster victims for NGHAs
If NGHAs are to act in full compliance with their humanitarian principles, they should be granted rapid and impartial access to disaster victims, for the purpose of delivering humanitarian assistance. It is the duty of the host government, as part of the exercising of sovereign responsibility, not to block such assistance, and to accept the impartial and apolitical action of NGHAs. Host governments should facilitate the rapid entry of relief staff, particularly by waiving requirements for transit, entry and exit visas, or arranging that these are rapidly granted. Governments should grant over-flight permission and landing rights for aircraft transporting international relief supplies and personnel, for the duration of the emergency relief phase.

3. Governments should facilitate the timely flow of relief goods and information during disasters. Relief supplies and equipment are brought into a country solely for the purpose of alleviating human suffering, not for commercial benefit or gain. Such supplies should normally be allowed free and unrestricted passage and should not be subject to requirements for consular certificates of origin or invoices, import and/or export licences or other restrictions, or to importation taxation, landing fees or port charges.

The temporary importation of necessary relief equipment, including vehicles, light aircraft and telecommunications equipment, should be facilitated by the receiving host government through the temporary waving of licence or registration restrictions. Equally, governments should not restrict the re-exportation of relief equipment at the end of a relief operation.

To facilitate disaster communications, host governments are encouraged to designate certain radio frequencies, which relief organizations may use in-country and for international communications for the purpose of disaster communications, and to make such frequencies known to the disaster response community prior to the disaster. They should authorize relief personnel to utilize all means of communication required for their relief operations.

4. Governments should seek to provide a co-ordinated disaster information and planning service
The overall planning and coordination of relief efforts is ultimately the responsibility of the host government. Planning and coordination can be greatly enhanced if NGHAs are provided with information on relief needs and government systems for planning and implementing relief efforts as well as information on potential security risks they may encounter. Governments are urged to provide such information to NGHAs.

To facilitate effective coordination and the efficient utilization of relief efforts, host governments are urged to designate, prior to disaster, a single point-of-contact for incoming NGHAs to liaise with the national authorities.

5. Disaster relief in the event of armed conflict In the event of armed conflict, relief actions are governed by the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law.

Annex II : Recommendations to donor governments

1. Donor governments should recognize and respect the independent, humanitarian and impartial actions of NGHAs. NGHAs are independent bodies whose independence and impartiality should be respected by donor governments. Donor governments should not use NGHAs to further any political or ideological aim.

2. Donor governments should provide funding with a guarantee of operational independence
NGHAs accept funding and material assistance from donor governments in the same spirit as they render it to disaster victims; one of humanity and independence of action. The implementation of relief actions is ultimately the responsibility of the NGHA and will be carried out according to the policies of that NGHA.

3. Donor governments should use their good offices to assist NGHAs in obtaining access to disaster victims. Donor governments should recognize the importance of accepting a level of responsibility for the security and freedom of access of NGHA staff to disaster sites. They should be prepared to exercise diplomacy with host governments on such issues if necessary.

Annex III : Recommendations to intergovernmental organisations

1. IGOs should recognize NGHAs, local and foreign, as valuable partners
NGHAs are willing to work with UN and other intergovernmental agencies to effect better disaster response. They do so in a spirit of partnership which respects the integrity and independence of all partners. Intergovernmental agencies must respect the independence and impartiality of the NGHAs. NGHAs should be consulted by UN agencies in the preparation of relief plans.

2. IGOs should assist host governments in providing an overall coordinating framework for international and local disaster relief NGHAs do not usually have the mandate to provide the overall coordinating framework for disasters which require an international response. This responsibility falls to the host government and the relevant United Nations authorities. They are urged to provide this service in a timely and effective manner to serve the affected state and the national and international disaster response community. In any case, NGHAs should make all efforts to ensure the effective co-ordination of their own services.
In the event of armed conflict, relief actions are governed by the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law.

3. IGOs should extend security protection provided for UN organizations, to NGHAs
Where security services are provided for intergovernmental organisations, this service should be extended to their operational NGHA partners where it is so requested.

4. IGOs should provide NGHAs with the same access to relevant information as is granted to UN organisations. IGOs are urged to share all information, pertinent to the implementation of effective disaster response, with their operational NGHA partners.

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