

An interactive 1-pager version with the additional text in pop-up boxes is also available.

The future of Humanitarian Coordination has to:

follow a clear strategic vision,...

...balance process with values,...

...and see committed participation...

...to be fit for purpose.

Short term milestones

Recognition that there are competing demands and trade-offs between setting clear priorities and (strategic) direction and ensuring inclusive participation.

- **Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** consistently work (both at country and at global level) to ensure there is clarity on what coordination is expected to achieve. It's a matter of leadership to ask the question from time to time: why are we here?
- **Agencies should:** should be required to explain their intentions and priorities for joining humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- **OCHA, donors, and agencies should:** clarify how they intend to address the implications of the localisation agenda for humanitarian coordination.
- **Donors should:** commission a review of the role and effectiveness of inter-cluster coordination bodies especially as to their role and effectiveness in prioritisation.

Consideration of values is integrated in coordination decision-making processes.

- **HCT/OCHA/CLAs should:** ensure that conversations on protection and principles are front and centre, rather than pushed to the end of the coordination agenda.

Agencies make commitments towards collective action for the greater good.

- **Agencies should:** clarify how their individual priorities fit within the HRP/HNO.

Clarity on current coordination roles and leadership responsibilities.

- **Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** consistently work (both at country and at global level) to ensure that there is individual agency accountability for collective commitments.
- **OCHA, supported by donors, should:** elaborate on how it sees humanitarian action in the future, and how it is setting itself up to support it.

Medium term milestones

Policy-discussions recognise complexity and the need for strategic humanitarian objectives that are more than the sum of the parts.

- **Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** create (both at country and at global level) transparency and clarity on the areas where there is convergence and collective action is feasible, and on the areas where this cannot be achieved given diverging views and positions.
- **OCHA/IASC/CLAs (at the global level) and OCHA/HC (at the country level), supported by donors should:** ensure clarity on which elements of humanitarian coordination are strategic, why they are strategic, and what the decision-making process is.
- **Donors and OCHA should:** clarify the link/prioritisation between inter-agency coordination and cross-cutting commitments (such as the nexus, AAP, localisation, Centrality of Protection, etc.) and accountability for these commitments.

Existing technical coordination tools are streamlined.

- **OCHA and agencies should:** review the balance between the need for humanitarian data and the use of information tools and the purpose of coordination.

Individual agencies situate themselves within collective action.

- **Agencies should:** better demonstrate - internally and externally- that they recognise the value of collective action and for this reason prioritise coordination.
- **Donors should:** ask partners on a regular basis how their internal systems align with collective planning processes.

Clarity on leadership responsibilities finding the balance between standardisation and contextualisation.

- **IASC should:** agree on what needs to be standardised and what should be context-specific in-country (or area-) based coordination arrangements.
- **OCHA, should:** build capacity in systems leadership and cross-agency collaborative working to ensure that those in facilitation roles have leadership skills as well as coordination skills.

Long(er) term milestones

A coordination architecture truly geared towards a clear and realistic humanitarian strategic vision, with appropriate connection to development goals.

- **Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** assert what humanitarian coordination can achieve and what it cannot achieve in a given context.
- **OCHA/IASC/CLAs (at the global level) and OCHA/HC (at the country level), supported by donors should:** ensure there is a collectively agreed accountability framework for coordinating/working collectively towards the humanitarian strategic vision.
- **Donors should:** enhance overall policy and operational coordination among themselves and agree on rewards for collectively coordinated outcomes in bilateral grant agreements.

A balance between technically-oriented coordination driven by tools and funding cycles and frank exchanges on strategy underpinned by values and principles and grounded in political realities.

- **Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** work to ensure that the clear and realistic humanitarian strategic vision discussed above is value-driven rather than process-driven.

Individual agencies are rewarded for fulfilling their commitments towards collective action.

- **Donors should:** prioritise agencies that have demonstrated that their priorities and actions have contributed to collective action.

Coordination model/mechanisms that are fit for purpose.

- **The structures of the refugee coordination model and the clusters should be harmonised.** Recognising its mandate for refugee response coordination, UNHCR should be prepared to report on its leadership and coordination role at the inter-agency level.

Short term milestones

- Meaningful partnerships and inter-agency coordination are only possible when there is clarity around how different actors interpret humanitarian action and conceive of their purpose. Humanitarian actors oscillate between an understanding of humanitarian action as an end in itself – to save lives and alleviate suffering – and as means to other goals – to contribute to stability and peace-building, for example. These two understandings of humanitarian action are not mutually exclusive, and coordination can be achieved by putting humanitarian principles, protection, and accountability at the centre of discussions. See: Unpacking Humanitarianism

- In their next strategies, agencies should consider what feasible/appropriate strategic humanitarian objectives are, and how they connect to development outcomes, the trade-offs required, and their potential impact.
- OCHA should also clarify HRP's strategic or operational character, and (if strategic and multi-year), how they align with the new UNSDCF. Such a clarification should consider what this means for humanitarian coordination specifically, and humanitarian-development coordination more generally.

...balance process with values,...

- The ICCG should for example function to ensure true prioritisation. In line with the importance of ensuring lean decision-making fora, one possibility is that a Deputy HC plays the ICCG function.

Recognition that there are competing demands and trade-offs between setting clear priorities and (strategic) direction and ensuring inclusive participation.

- Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** consistently work (both at country and at global level) to ensure there is clarity on what coordination is expected to achieve. It's a matter of leadership to ask the question from time to time: why are we here?
- Agencies should:** should be required to explain their intentions and priorities for joining humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- OCHA, donors, and agencies should:** clarify how they intend to address the implications of the localisation agenda for humanitarian coordination.
- Donors should:** commission a review of the role and effectiveness of inter-cluster coordination bodies especially as to their role and effectiveness in prioritisation.

Consideration of values is integrated in coordination decision-making processes.

- HCT/OCHA/CLAs should:** ensure that conversations on protection and principles are front and centre, rather than pushed to the end of the coordination agenda.

Agencies make commitments towards collective action for the greater good.

- Agencies should:** clarify how their individual priorities fit within the HRP/HNO.

Clarity on current coordination roles and leadership responsibilities.

- Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** consistently work (both at country and at global level) to ensure that there is individual agency accountability for collective commitments.
- OCHA, supported by donors, should:** elaborate on how it sees humanitarian action in the future, and how it is setting itself up to support it.

Policy: the new object parts.

- Those should transp

convergence and collective action is feasible, and on

achieve and what it cannot achieve in a given

- Comparative advantage is not specific to the differences between humanitarian, development, and peace actors, but should be more fully explored between humanitarian actors themselves. Organisations will make decisions and align investments based on the interpretation of their mandate and their individual vision of humanitarian action. Individual interpretations as to what being fit for purpose in delivering humanitarian response in conflict settings implies does not necessarily lead to greater collective outcomes. See: Unpacking Humanitarianism
- It is important that agencies clearly consider how to connect various cross-cutting commitments, and how projects are/can be tailored to them.
- In these considerations, there needs to be a reflection on how commitments entered into at HQ level connect with the country-level, and the extent to which prioritisation is necessary. Importantly, the HQ should not simply develop and push guidelines to the field, but should lead discussions around the commitments, and the most suitable way to implement them in any specific context.

localisation, Centrality of Protection, etc.) and accountability

Existing tool streamlined

- OCHA and between the use of inform coordination

Individual agencies situate themselves within collective action.

- Agencie and exte collective coordination.

- As part of at least one HCT meeting per year, heads of agencies should report on how their individual agency objectives fit within the HRP.

Donors should: promise agencies that have demonstrated that their priorities and actions have

- While there has been standardisation creating predictability in the coordination tools, there is a need to clarify the standard functions and behaviour for leadership.
- Concepts that require clarification and that should be put on the top of the agenda are notably:
 - the co-leadership of coordination mechanisms, in view of achieving a better definition of the function and its implications, especially in terms of accountabilities.
 - whether the provider of last resort concept is still relevant or not.
 - the place of regional coordination hubs as UN-led humanitarian coordination is either global (IASC) or country-based (HCT), while many agencies' country directors are accountable to regional directors.
 - the appropriate role for host state authorities of conflict-affected countries and what the implications are of their role in coordination mechanisms in relation to the HDP nexus and a principled approach.

- OCHA, s and cross that those as well as

- Donors should push OCHA, in the development of its new strategy, to reflect on what it has achieved so far, what the current challenges are, what the future challenges are expected to be, and what role it expects humanitarian coordination to play. This can be done by including these points in its strategy consultations, and by having dedicated sections in its new strategic plan on them.

- OCHA's new strategy should also include a reflection on the leadership type/skills required for staff with coordination responsibilities (see the medium-term milestone).

Short term milestones

- Donors should push OCHA to clarify that beyond the outcomes of an operational nature (like avoiding duplication) the major purpose of coordination is to manage competing demands and prioritise, and be clear as to why certain choices are made. Managing competing demands and making potentially hard choices needs to be done in smaller groups, to find solutions to the trade-offs.
- Meetings which have as their purpose to share information can be open to all, but to ensure clear priority-setting, meetings of a strategic decision-making character should be among a smaller group of participants. For example, CLAs can ensure that Cluster Strategic Advisory Groups, are kept small, in view of retaining a truly strategic character.
- To ensure a system of representation along democratic principles, criteria for inclusion should be clarified. Representatives should be held to account for gathering views and reporting back to their constituents. There is also a need to clarify who would be the 'gate-keeper' of such meetings.

- Donors should reflect on and explain the implications of their bilateral funding relations with agencies for collective action. It is a responsibility of donors to understand the implications of pushing their own pet priorities onto agencies. Pushing for specialisation may mean that agencies lose their overall vision as to how everything connects, as they focus on commitment-specific reporting tools.
- There needs to be a donor-only forum for consultations (globally and at country level) on differences, and potential complementarity (or contradictions) in approaches and funding priorities. A suggestion is to start small first (E6) and then in longer term building out to include also non-traditional donors. Another possibility is to revitalise the GHD to allow a better formulation of common agendas.
- IASC can better clarify how and which of its decisions/guidance relate to/link with specific agency country prioritisation exercises.

...and see committed participation...

...to be fit for purpose.

Recognition that there are competing demands and trade-offs between setting

Agencies make commitments towards collective action for the greater good.

- Agencies should:** clarify how their individual priorities fit within the HRP/HNO.

- The IASC, agencies and donors should look at the gap in accountability of agency country directors for implementing global commitments. Many Country Directors report to regional offices, which are focused on individual agency performance and insufficiently part of collective IASC or HCT processes and commitments. Regional Directors should be held accountable for their support and guidance to country directors on collective commitments and coordination engagement at the country level.

- OCHA, supported by donors, should:** elaborate on how it sees humanitarian action in the future, and how it is setting itself up to support it.

Medium term milestones

Policy-discussions recognise complexity and the need for strategic humanitarian objectives that are more than the sum of the parts.

- Those in coordination leadership positions* should:** create (both at country and at global level) transparency and clarity on the areas where there is convergence and collective action is feasible, and on the areas where this cannot be achieved given diverging views and positions.
- OCHA/IASC/CLAs (at the global level) and OCHA/HC (at the country level), supported by donors should:** ensure clarity on which elements of humanitarian coordination are strategic, why they are strategic, and what the decision-making process is.
- Donors and OCHA should:** clarify the link/prioritisation between inter-agency coordination and cross-cutting commitments (such as the nexus, AAP, localisation, Centrality of Protection, etc.) and accountability for these commitments.

Existing technical coordination tools are streamlined.

- OCHA and agencies should:** review the balance between the need for humanitarian data and the use of information tools and the purpose of coordination.

Individual agencies situate themselves within collective action.

- Agencies should:** better demonstrate - internally and externally- that they recognise the value of collective action and for this reason prioritise coordination.
- Donors should:** ask partners on a regular basis how their internal systems align with collective planning processes.

Clarity on leadership responsibilities finding the balance between standardisation and contextualisation.

- IASC should:** agree on what needs to be standardised and what should be context-specific in-country (or area-) based coordination arrangements.
- OCHA, should:** build capacity in systems leadership and cross-agency collaborative working to ensure that those in facilitation roles have leadership skills as well as coordination skills.

*"Coordination leadership positions" include agencies, such as OCHA, positions, such as HCs and Cluster Coordinators.

- Meaningful partnerships and inter-agency coordination are only possible when there is clarity around how different actors interpret humanitarian action and conceive of their purpose. Humanitarian actors oscillate between an understanding of humanitarian action as an end in itself – to save lives and alleviate suffering – and as means to other goals – to contribute to stability and peace-building, for example. These two understandings of humanitarian action are not mutually exclusive, and coordination can be achieved by putting humanitarian principles, protection, and accountability at the centre of discussions. See Unpacking Humanitarianism
- In their next strategies, agencies should consider what feasible/appropriate strategic humanitarian objectives are, and how they connect to development goals, the trade-offs required, and their potential impact.
- OCHA should also clarify HRP's strategic or operational character, and (if strategic and multi-year), how they align with the new UNSDCF. Such a clarification should consider what this means for humanitarian coordination specifically, and humanitarian-development coordination more generally.

operational coordination among themselves and agree on rewards for collectively coordinated

- Such a review would need need to identify situations that warrant different information and coordination needs. It should also analyse the quality of data that is available, rather than the quantity.

coordination driven by tools and funding

- Incentives to coordinate are intrinsically linked to the agency understanding that coordination outcomes are beneficial for the individual agency mandate, and there is a need for agencies to shift their mindset and focus from what they can achieve alone, to what they can achieve through coordination.
- Internally, agencies should ensure that coordination responsibilities are fully (and properly) understood, appreciated, and valued/incentivised across the organisation. This includes having a clear business case for why coordination is important from a single agency perspective, aligning internal systems to ensure agency-wide accountability for the fulfilment of coordination responsibilities. For CLAs, one crucial step in institutionalising the CLA role is also to cover key CLA functions, including cluster leadership positions, from the agency's core budget.
- Agencies should also – as part of their strategies – elaborate on how they prioritise coordination activities amidst other priorities.
- To promote a truly collective coordination mindset, agencies can also institutionalise a system whereby staff with coordination responsibilities regularly work across different agencies.

and the clusters should be harmonised.

Recognising its mandate for refugee response coordination in its internal

- To ensure that humanitarian coordination is properly guided by strategic vision, OCHA should ensure that there is clarity in thinking around how staff with coordination responsibilities are chosen, and that recruitment/training takes leadership skills into account. Insights can be drawn from the ongoing Leadership Labs, which have so far highlighted, among other things, that relational skills and mindsets are critical to effectiveness, and bold decision-making. See link.

An interactive 1-pager version with the additional text in pop-up boxes is also available.

The future of Humanitarian Coordination has to:

follow a clear strategic vision,...

...balance process with values,...

...and see committed participation...

...to be fit for purpose.

This Roadmap is the final output of the first phase of HERE-Geneva's Future of Humanitarian Coordination Project.
© HERE-Geneva, March 2022.

Recognition demands a clear priorities and (strategic) direction and ensuring inclusive participation.

• Those in coordination leadership positions* should: consistently work (both at country and at global level) to ensure that coordination is not just a box-ticking exercise, but a process that is driven by the need to achieve humanitarian goals.

- A mutual accountability framework could take its roots in the Grand Bargain/Grand Bargain 2.0. Another suggestion is to revitalise the Peer-to-Peer Support Project (P2P) to ensure learning-focused inter-agency real time evaluations.
- Clear mutual accountability within the inter-agency context, includes the designation of lead-agency at the country level.

- OCHA, donors and NGOs should: ensure clarity on which elements of humanitarian coordination they are responsible for, how they will ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian coordination, donors can increasingly assess the added value of joint approaches and the pooling of donor contributions.
- Donors, OCHA and NGOs should advocate where relevant for multi-year Humanitarian Response Plans and matching donor commitments to allow CBPFs to provide multi-year funding.

Consideration of values is integrated in coordination decision-making processes.

- HCT/OCHA and NGOs should: ensure that humanitarian coordination is not just a box-ticking exercise, but a process that is driven by the need to achieve humanitarian goals. Frank exchanges on strategy should also look at the role of host governments and the reality of the political economy of humanitarian and development aid.

Agencies situate themselves within collective action.

- Agencies should: ensure that humanitarian coordination is not just a box-ticking exercise, but a process that is driven by the need to achieve humanitarian goals. Coordination should be consistently part of any capacity assessment, and donors can reduce funding to agencies that are unable to demonstrate how their actions have contributed to the greater good.

Clarity on leadership responsibilities finding

- Those in coordination leadership positions* should: ensure that humanitarian coordination is not just a box-ticking exercise, but a process that is driven by the need to achieve humanitarian goals. The refugee coordination model could be structured along similar lines as the clusters with the caveat that the number of clusters/sectors should be kept limited to avoid fragmentation/silos and accountabilities clearly defined.
- Such a harmonised model might be one that could be the arrangement for area-based coordination, where an inter-agency body (ISCG) reports to a lead-agency which holds overall responsibility.

- OCHA, supported by donors, should: elaborate on how it sees humanitarian action in the future, and how it is setting itself up to support it.

the need for strategic humanitarian objectives that are more than the sum of the parts.

• Those in coordination leadership positions*

donors should: ensure clarity on which elements

localisation, continuity of protection, etc.) and accountability for these commitments.

Existing technical coordination tools are streamlined.

Individual agencies situate themselves within collective action.

- Donors should: ask partners on a regular basis how their internal systems align with collective planning processes.

Clarity on leadership responsibilities finding

- OCHA, should: build capacity in systems leadership and cross-agency collaborative working to ensure that those in facilitation roles have leadership skills as well as coordination skills.

*"Coordination leadership positions" include agencies, such as OCHA, IASC, CLAs, ICCG, UNHCR, but also specific positions, such as HCs and Cluster Coordinators.

Long(er) term milestones

A coordination architecture truly geared towards a clear and realistic humanitarian strategic vision, with appropriate connection to development goals.

- Those in coordination leadership positions* should: assert what humanitarian coordination can achieve and what it cannot achieve in a given context.
- OCHA/IASC/CLAs (at the global level) and OCHA/HC (at the country level), supported by donors should: ensure there is a collectively agreed accountability framework for coordinating/working collectively towards the humanitarian strategic vision.
- Donors should: enhance overall policy and operational coordination among themselves and agree on rewards for collectively coordinated outcomes in bilateral grant agreements.

A balance between technically-oriented coordination driven by tools and funding cycles and frank exchanges on strategy underpinned by values and principles and grounded in political realities.

- Those in coordination leadership positions* should: work to ensure that the clear and realistic humanitarian strategic vision discussed above is value-driven rather than process-driven.

Individual agencies are rewarded for fulfilling their commitments towards collective action.

- Donors should: prioritise agencies that have demonstrated that their priorities and actions have contributed to collective action.

Coordination model/mechanisms that are fit for purpose.

- The structures of the refugee coordination model and the clusters should be harmonised. Recognising its mandate for refugee response coordination, UNHCR should be prepared to report on its leadership and coordination role at the inter-agency level.