

Research Report

MUNISH '12



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Forum	General Assembly Third Committee
Issue:	Reform and regulation of humanitarian aid
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Introduction

Humanitarian aid is assistance (of any kind) provided for humanitarian purposes, mostly in response to humanitarian crises including nature disaster and man-made disaster (for example wars). The main aim of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. Recognize the difference between humanitarian aid and development aid: development seeks to address the underlying socioeconomic factors, which may have led to a crisis or emergency.

Humanitarian aid is funded by donations from individuals, corporations, governments, and other (non-governmental) organizations. The funding and delivery of humanitarian aid is increasingly international, making it much faster, more responsive and more effective in coping with to major emergencies affecting large numbers of people. The international humanitarian response to a crisis or emergency is coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), pursuant to Resolution 66/119 of the United Nations General Assembly (see UN involvement).

The aim and importance of humanitarian aid is generally known, countries would be lost without it. But is the humanitarian aid being used as effectively as possible?

Definition of Key Terms

Natural disaster

Any event or force of nature that has catastrophic consequences, such as an avalanche, earthquake, flood, forest fire, hurricane, lightning, tornado, tsunami, or a volcanic eruption. A natural disaster includes loss of life, injury, economic loss, and environmental loss.



Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a legally constituted organization created by [natural](#) or [legal persons](#) that operates independently from any form of [government](#). The term originated from the [United Nations](#) (UN), and is normally used to refer to organizations that are not a part of the government and are not conventional for profit business.

General Overview

It is generally known that humanitarian aid is a benefit for countries in need. However, because of the growing importance of humanitarian aid it is relevant that it is used as effective as possible. This is a point that was heavily criticized. An example of the failure of humanitarian-aid missions is the failure of Haiti.

On 12 January 2010 the Haiti 2010 Earthquake occurred, a catastrophic magnitude 7.0 Mw earthquake. The earthquake affected an estimated three million people; the Haitian government reported that an estimated 316,000 people had died, 300,000 had been injured, and a one million made homeless. The government of Haiti also estimated that 250,00 residences and 30,000 commercial buildings had collapsed or were severely damaged. The Haiti 2010 Earthquake was announced a natural disaster.

Many nations responded to appeals for humanitarian aid, pledging funds, and dispatching rescue and medical teams, engineers and support personnel. Currently, two years after the earthquake, Haiti hosts one of the largest and best-funded international aid deployments in the world: an estimated 399 projects and 56 organizations are established in the country.

That said nobody precisely seems to know how many dollars are invested in the projects and all the other forms of aid, such as food and medical teams, and how many dollars of monetary aid have been donated. The accounting seems to have a sliding scale that can move hundreds of millions of dollars one way or another. By all means, billions of dollars have been invested in the country. However, two years after the natural disaster, many questions have been raised.

At the end of 2010, about eleven months after the earthquake, a cholera epidemic claimed at least 2,500 lives, although cholera is a disease that is easily treated and controlled. Because only little has been done to improve the sanitation across the country it allowed cholera to spread at a dizzying pace. In 2011, at least one million of the 9,7 million inhabitants of Haiti

still lived in tents and only 5% of the 674 million cu. of rubble, still remaining of the earthquake, in Port-au-Prince (the capital of Haiti) was removed.

Communication is an important aspect of this issue. Lack of communication, also caused by the damage the earthquake has done to the electrical networks, caused confusion over who was in charge, air traffic congestion, and problems with prioritization of flights. Different organizations were not communicating with each other properly, which led to organizations working alone, on different cases in the country and therefore using their money inefficiently. Apart from using their funds inefficiently, more criticism on humanitarian-aid groups has been made. Chorus of critics accuse humanitarian-aid groups of using misery to validate their existence and creating a culture of dependence among the people they are supposed to help.

But also the Haitian government is to blame. Stable, transparent institutions — like police, courts and banks — are critical to the success of poor nations. But Haiti's long history of disarray has left it with only a few institutions worthy of trust. And as long as the Haitian government will not approach this issue with measures and punishments, Haiti will not be saved and the population will suffer.

The combination of inefficient organizations and the country's defective political culture leads to failure of humanitarian-aid missions.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) can without a doubt be called one of the biggest and most important organizations regarded the humanitarian aid. The ICRC works worldwide to provide humanitarian help for people affected by conflict and armed violence and to promote the laws that protect victims of war. The organization is financed mainly by voluntary donations from governments and from national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Founded in 1933, the International Rescue Committee is a voluntary organization involved in global emergency relief, rehabilitation, and advocacy for refugees and resettlement assistance. **The IRC delivers lifesaving aid in emergencies, rebuilds shattered communities, cares for war-traumatized children, rehabilitates health care, water and sanitation systems, reunites separated families, restores lost livelihoods, establishes schools, trains teachers, strengthens the capacity of local organizations and**

supports civil society and good-governance initiatives, situations that occur frequently during times of war and after cases after the occurrence of natural disasters.

Haiti

The humanitarian aid as a response to the 7.0 magnitude earthquake, occurred in Haiti, is an example of failures in the humanitarian aid system. Billions of dollars have been invested in the country but the results are hardly seen. The approach of tackling the aid was wrong and this needs to be changed in following situations and Haiti is able to set an example for upcoming nations with similar issues.

Syria

Humanitarian aid is not only provided as response to natural disasters, also in times of war nations show their support by for example establishing funds and donating monetary aid. Syria is a nation currently in war and the same issue is occurring. Humanitarian aid worth billions of dollars is being delivered but the effects are hardly recognized. Since this is a current issue, this resolution will be from high importance for Syria.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December, 1991	The Department for Humanitarian Affairs has been created
March, 2006	Improvement of the OHCA by funding the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
January 12 th , 2010	Haiti 2010 Earthquake
January 22 th , 2010	Government of Haiti calls of the search for survivors, but delivering of humanitarian aid continues up to this day

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, 23 December 2011 (**A/RES/66/227**)
- Strengthening humanitarian assistance, emergency relief and rehabilitation in response to the severe drought in the Horn of Africa region, 15 December 2011 (**A/RES/66/120**)

- Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, 15 December 2011 (**A/RES/66/119**)

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In 1991 the United Nations (UN) created a separate UN body, the Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) meaning to create an illusion of a centralized, efficient aid system.

After the Asian tsunami in 2005, the previous system is adapted by launching a funding mechanism called the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) by the UN in March 2006, which aims to enable more timely and reliable assistance to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts. The CERF is funded by contributions from governments, private businesses, foundations, and individuals. Including this adaptation, the UN developed a system to improve aid efforts.

Humanitarian aid-groups have done attempts on working more precisely and reassuring the world's population they are using their funds as effectively as possible, this so the population will not lower the amount of donations.

Possible Solutions

An international organization should be established, which will help governments of poor countries gaining confidence and a helping hand on the approach of ruling their nation. This organization will consist of a team of professionals such as, but not limited to, lawyers, politicians, and sociologists.

Another organization should be funded, which will be separated in different groups, each with different tasks. One will keep track of the accounting of the donations and humanitarian aid the nations deliver. Also, a part should keep track of the accounting of the NGOs and other humanitarian-aid groups. At last, the behaviour of the organizations in the society should be observed. Regulations about the behaviour of organizations should be set up and the organization should verify the behaviour of the humanitarian-aid groups. The regulation will have consequences.

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Appendix or Appendices

- i. A PDF-file on the failure of humanitarian aid of Haiti
<http://www.napawash.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/06-04.pdf>
- ii. A policy analysis on the continuing failure of foreign aid in general
<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa065.html>
- iii. An article on the famine in Somalia and their chronic political failure
http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-leadership/a-famine-in-somalia-and-a-chronic-political-failure-on-humanitarian-aid/2011/08/03/gIQAPaOgrI_story.html



