

# Blinded by Humanity: What next for humanitarian aid?

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# Humanitarian aid – Context and Constraints

- Legal
- Financial
- Organisational
- Cultural
- Political
- Refugees, internally displaced and asylum-seekers
- Coordination of humanitarian aid
- Peacekeeping
- UN policy
- Mine action

# Context - Legal

## International Refugee Law:

Convention on Status of Refugees (1951) and Protocol (1967)

- Is it fit for purpose?

## International Humanitarian Law (IHL):

Geneva Conventions (1949) and Protocols (1977)

- Implications for humanitarian aid in conflicts

# Constraints - Financial

Funding of humanitarian aid is voluntary

- “CNN factor” – some emergencies well-funded, others not
- Programmes “donor-driven”

Solutions?

- Central Emergency Response Fund (2006)
- Other “pooled funds”
- Other solutions?

# Constraints - Organisational

## International humanitarian system

- Red X, UN, Bilaterals, NGOs, Private sector
- Fragmented and Supply driven

## Emergency Relief Coordinator – (since 1991)

- Inter-Agency Standing Committee
- Does the system work?

# Constraints - Political

## Humanitarian aid in conflicts

- Influenced by donor politics
- Since 2001 role of military
- and counter-terrorism

## Aid as alternative to political action

- Aid can prolong conflict

# Context - Cultural

## Knowing the context

- Language, culture, religion
- Short assignments
- One size fits all

## Local ownership

- Who is responsible?
- Who is doing the work?

# Many Constraints - How Are We Doing?

## Good intentions are not enough

- Humanitarian operations difficult and complex
- Many dilemmas
- Coordination challenge

## Blind to some simple solutions

- Brain drain
- Election madness
- Reform is possible

# A Change of Perspective

## High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness - Busan (2011)

- “Aid effectiveness” to “development effectiveness”
- New perspective

## World Humanitarian Summit (2016)

- What prospects?
- What goals?