

# OCHA'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2023–2026

Transforming  
Humanitarian Coordination



OCHA

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# Introduction

The international humanitarian system<sup>1</sup> faces an exponential rise in humanitarian needs. Between 2011 and 2020, the number of people targeted for assistance rose by 59 million before increasing again by 74 million over the past two years alone.

The operating environment will grow more complex over the coming decade. While climate change, conflict, economic crisis, inequality and pandemics are not new, these drivers of need are intensifying. They are also interacting and compounding in unpredictable ways and growing increasingly irreversible.

A fragmented and competitive geopolitical landscape exacerbates these challenges, weakening multilateral efforts to address them. At the same time, the system is buckling under its resource constraints. By 2026, needs are set to far outpace resources, leaving an inundated humanitarian system struggling to meet a mere fraction of needs.

OCHA's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 (the Plan) outlines six transformational priorities to address the challenges of this rapidly changing landscape:



A coherent humanitarian response that is people centred, context specific, contributes to community resilience and promotes concrete protection outcomes



Humanitarian response that is inclusive and leaves no one behind



Systematic and predictable leadership on access



Catalytic humanitarian financing that delivers impact in people's lives



Durable solutions to protracted internal displacement



Strategic analysis of risks and trends to adapt to an evolving landscape

These priorities neither reflect all issues that require improvement nor cover all activities in OCHA's Strategic Results Framework or annual workplans. Rather, they address the most critical

areas where transformation is needed, adaptation is possible and OCHA has a key leadership role. The Plan will be translated into operational practice through implementation

1. The international humanitarian system is a short-hand term for a broad network of actors that has evolved to respond to humanitarian crises in the 30 years since the passage of United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/182. OCHA coordinates or coordinates with many of these humanitarian actors, including Inter-Agency Standing Committee members.

plans. Work across OCHA's five core functions – Coordination, Advocacy and Communications, Humanitarian Financing, Policy and Information Management (see chapter B.II.) – will help to achieve these priorities.

The Plan is an instalment towards where OCHA needs to be in order to respond to challenges, not only over the next four years but over the next decade. The context analysis that follows considers key drivers of need and their implications for humanitarian action beyond 2026. The Plan then focuses on how OCHA will use its mandate and transformational priorities over the next four years to meet those challenges and help achieve the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A final section reviews the actions needed to ensure that the leadership, partnerships

and workforce are in place to enable these transformations.

This document also considers reviews carried out since OCHA's previous Strategic Plan 2018–2021, such as the 2021 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network, the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (2021), the Independent Review of the Implementation of the IASC Protection Policy (2022), and several Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations and Peer-to-Peer Country Missions. These reviews have shaped the Plan's vision of an international humanitarian system able to respond to the challenges ahead, and of OCHA's role in leading and coordinating humanitarian assistance and protection.

A joint team of humanitarian agencies conducts an assessment mission at the Kanyaruchinya relocation site in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The site hosted people affected by the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in September 2021. OCHA/Alioune N'Diaye



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CHAPTER

**01**

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**CONTEXT ANALYSIS –  
THE WORLD IN 2026 AND  
BEYOND**



## INTRODUCTION

Six trends will drive need and shape humanitarian action in the coming decade: (1) the climate crisis, (2) slow and uneven economic growth, (3) widening inequality, (4) increasing instability, fragility and conflict, (5) pandemics and disease outbreaks, and (6) a fragmented, competitive geopolitical landscape. These trends will disproportionately impact local communities with limited participation in decision-making. The decade will also bring positive developments, including growing national and local capacities to prepare for and respond to climate hazards, and scientific and technological developments that improve lives and transform economies. However, for the poorest, challenges threaten to outpace progress, and by 2026 many more people will

need national, local or international humanitarian assistance to survive.

A bleak future is not inevitable. “We are at an inflection point in history,” the UN Secretary-General noted. “Humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: a breakdown or a breakthrough.”<sup>2</sup> Choices, commitments and actions by leaders today can reduce need and vulnerability tomorrow. The Secretary-General’s Common Agenda offers a bold plan to rebuild trust, improve outcomes for the most vulnerable people, and prevent and respond to major global risks. Humanitarian actors will continue to advocate for global solidarity for people in crisis, but they must also prepare for growing risks and trends.

A Regional Inter-Cluster Mission takes place in the Uvira Highlands, South Kivu Province, eastern DRC, to rapidly assess the humanitarian situation and needs in an area affected by violence.  
OCHA/Antoine Lemonnier

2. United Nations, [Our Common Agenda - Report of the Secretary-General](#), 2021.

## SIX TRENDS THAT WILL DRIVE VULNERABILITY AND NEEDS OVER THE COMING DECADE



### The climate crisis

The climate crisis will drive unprecedented humanitarian needs in current and emerging hotspots. A 1.5°C increase in global warming by 2030 will only intensify climate shocks that already drive food insecurity, threaten public health and trigger mass displacement. By 2030, the number of disaster events is projected to reach 560 per year, or 1.5 per day — a 40 per cent increase in only 15 years.<sup>3</sup> The most severe impacts will fall on developing countries and vulnerable communities. Women and girls will face higher levels of mortality, displacement, gender-based violence, economic losses, lost education and child marriage.<sup>4</sup> The World Bank predicts that as many as 216 million people could move within their countries by 2050 due to slow-onset climate impacts.<sup>5</sup> Rapid urbanization and population growth will lead to highly vulnerable urban communities. In the 12 countries with an inter-agency humanitarian appeal that are most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change, population growth is projected to increase by 99 per cent and urbanization by 213 per cent by 2050.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, new hotspots will require assistance beyond traditional humanitarian contexts as climate shocks compound other trends and limit people's ability to prepare, respond and recover.<sup>7</sup>



### Slow and uneven economic growth

People in fragile and conflict-affected States will fall further behind. The economic aftershocks from the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the impacts of the Ukraine crisis, are slowing recovery in fragile and conflict-affected States.<sup>8</sup> High rates of poverty coupled with reduced tax revenue, foreign investment and spending on basic services will be hard to reverse. Debt pressures are mounting, with 40 per cent of countries with an inter-agency humanitarian response plan in 2022 at high risk of, or already in, debt distress.<sup>9</sup> Slow growth and unsustainable debt compounded by economic, political and climate shocks will further cripple basic services. Socioeconomic conditions in the poorest nations, particularly those already affected by protracted crises and conflict, will likely worsen and become self-reinforcing.



### Widening inequality

Widening inequality will push more people into poverty in humanitarian contexts and beyond. Progress in reducing global poverty has essentially halted. Given current trends, 574 million people — nearly 7 per cent of the world's population — will still be living on

3. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, [Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022: Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future, 2022](#).

4. United Nations Development Programme, Gender and Climate Change: [Overview of Linkages Between Gender and Climate Change, 2016](#).

5. World Bank Group, Groundswell Part 2: [Acting on Internal Climate Migration, 2021](#).

6. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Financial Tracking Service Appeals and Response Plans 2022](#); Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative, [ND-GAIN Country Index](#); United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, [World Population Prospects 2022](#).

7. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, No Return to Normal: [The Growing Humanitarian Climate Emergency – Preliminary Key Messages and Recommendations, 22 September 2022](#).

8. International Monetary Fund, [World Economic Outlook: War Sets Back the Global Recovery](#), April 2022

9. Ibid.



less than US\$2.15 a day in 2030, with most of those people in Africa.<sup>10</sup> This number, much higher than the target of 3 per cent, may rise even further due to fallout from the Ukraine conflict.<sup>11</sup> The “new poor” will mostly be in countries where poverty was concentrated before the pandemic, including sub-Saharan Africa and conflict-affected States.<sup>12</sup> By 2030, up to two thirds of the world’s extreme poor are expected to live in fragile contexts.<sup>13</sup> However, growing inequality and poverty will not be limited to low-income countries; several middle-income countries will have large poor populations.<sup>14</sup> The pandemic hit women, low-skilled and informal workers, ethnic minorities and youth the hardest, and they now stand to lose the most from slow recovery, reduced access to basic services and shifts in labour markets. Facing years of income reduction, food insecurity and low resilience to cope with disasters, a growing number of poor people in low- and middle-income countries will need humanitarian assistance.



### Increased instability, fragility and conflict

The world will see more instability, violence and conflict. Since 2010, the number of conflicts has almost doubled.<sup>15</sup> Inflation,

inequality, water scarcity, food insecurity, deteriorating economic conditions, reduced access to basic services and education, and other risk factors are intensifying, further increasing unrest.<sup>16</sup> Concurrently, a competitive and fragmented geopolitical environment is heightening mistrust between global powers, creating volatility and opening power vacuums for non-State armed groups (see trend six).<sup>17</sup> Advances in technology and arms proliferation are further escalating conflict risks. New weapons systems can more easily attack infrastructure, financial systems and computer networks, all bearing significant societal risks.<sup>18</sup> Civilians will continue to bear the brunt of the suffering, with widespread violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses. Armed conflict creates dire consequences for gender equality, undermining the protection and participation of women and girls. An estimated 90 per cent of casualties in armed conflicts are civilians, 70 per cent of them women and children.<sup>19</sup> Millions more will uproot their lives to escape violence and conflict, resulting in widespread poverty, hunger and discrimination.<sup>20</sup> Without intervention, most will endure protracted displacement with little access to basic services, land, livelihoods and education, as well as a limited capacity to cope with other economic, climate or health shocks.

10. World Bank, [Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course](#), 2022.

11. Ibid.

12. Brookings Institution, [Extreme Poverty in the Time of COVID-19: Prepared for United Nations Virtual Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty \(2018-2027\)](#), 2021.

13. World Bank, [Fragility, Conflict and Violence Overview](#), 30 September 2022.

14. Brookings Institution, [Extreme Poverty in the Time of COVID-19: Prepared for United Nations Virtual Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty \(2018-2027\)](#), 2021.

15. Uppsala Conflict Data Program, [Number of Conflicts 1975-2021](#).

16. United Nations, [Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General](#), 2021.

17. United Nations and World Bank, [Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict](#), 2018. In 2020, only 21 peace agreements were signed or declared, the lowest since the end of the Cold War. As of mid-2021, there had been just seven such agreements. International Rescue Committee, [David A. Morse Lecture at the Council on Foreign Relations by President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee David Miliband](#), 15 December 2021.

18. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, [Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World](#), March 2021.

19. Rachel Mayanja, [Armed Conflict and Women – 10 Years of Security Council Resolution 1325](#).

20. In conflicts that kill hundreds or thousands of people, millions more may be forcibly displaced, adding to 100 million already forcibly displaced worldwide. Hugo Slim, [Solferino 21: Warfare, Civilians and Humanitarians in the Twenty-First Century](#), 2022; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [A record 100 million people forcibly displaced worldwide](#), 23 May 2022.



This OCHA team assessed residents' needs in an area in Ukraine's Kharkivska Oblast that returned to Government control in the spring of 2022. OCHA/Matteo Minasi



### Pandemics and disease outbreaks

Pandemics, epidemics and disease outbreaks will grow in frequency and diversity. Deforestation, agricultural practices and wildlife trade are increasing the risk of zoonotic pathogen transfers, while rising temperatures bring diseases to new places. An interconnected world enables pathogens to spread rapidly, magnifying socioeconomic impacts. All countries will be impacted, but the poorest countries and most vulnerable members of society will suffer most. Poverty, weak health systems, lack of social protection measures, and high levels of mistrust and conflict will quickly tip outbreaks into socioeconomic and humanitarian disasters. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, women and girls are particularly at risk, facing multiple forms of discrimination and increased exposure to violence, job losses and secondary health impacts, including lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care.



### A fragmented and competitive geopolitical landscape

The world order will be more multipolar, fragmented and competitive, exacerbating drivers of need and weakening efforts to address them. The five trends above are not inevitable, but diplomacy, innovation, and collective ambition and action will be needed to change their direction. However, geopolitical trends make that joint effort unlikely. Broad groups of State and non-State actors are competing to advance their interests and ideologies in a multipolar landscape. Uncertainty, volatility and conflict risks are likely to increase as powers compete for resources, market share and political influence. Heightened tensions between global powers create new risks of conflict and socioeconomic harm. Without a course correction, it will be difficult to address global challenges and transnational threats. Without recommitment to international law, norms and multilateralism, the institutions designed to protect against humanitarian crises will be undermined, leading to perilous conditions for affected people and dangerous operating environments for those serving them.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THESE TRENDS FOR HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND ACTION

These six trends will interact to make crises more frequent and harder to resolve, as need and vulnerability become more entrenched. Crises will become less predictable, as underlying drivers and solutions become increasingly complex. The most vulnerable will bear the brunt of the consequences, from disrupted supply chains and unstable financial markets to volatile food and commodity prices and shifts in labour markets. Local communities – who have limited participation in decision-making that responds to these issues – will be the most impacted. Risks will compound, creating protracted and entrenched vulnerability and need. With less opportunity to recover, the lines where humanitarian needs begin and end will become increasingly blurred.

Humanitarian needs will rise exponentially, requiring expanded and new sources of funding. Many people will remain in need, while countless more will be pushed to the brink of survival. Growing fragility and collapsed social safety nets will obstruct development, forcing humanitarian actors to meet populations' needs. Humanitarian needs will far outstrip resources, even as response costs grow due to rising food and transport prices and operational complexity. Reliance on a small group of donors will become untenable. Without more financing and a new approach to deliver and finance aid – including through private sector participation – across the Humanitarian, Development, Peace (HDP) and climate sectors, the international humanitarian system will be able to meet only a fraction of needs in 2026 and beyond.

The number of people displaced by disasters will climb dramatically.<sup>21</sup> Conflict, instability and socioeconomic factors will displace more people within and across borders.<sup>22</sup> These flows will further increase pressure on neighbouring countries, local governments and host communities. Irregular migrants and those seeking asylum are likely to face hard-line deterrence policies, which could cause humanitarian crises at borders.<sup>23</sup> In urban areas, where most displaced people settle, unplanned urbanization and climate change will place more people at risk of death and injury, secondary displacement, endemic poverty and limited basic services.<sup>24</sup> In addition to new displacements, humanitarian actors must serve millions of people in protracted displacement, as conflicts and fiscal limitations divert attention and resources from durable solutions.<sup>25</sup>

Access to humanitarian assistance and protection will become more difficult. As geopolitical tensions grow, conflicts increase and non-State armed groups proliferate, more people will live in hard-to-reach areas. It will be harder to access assistance and protection and more dangerous to provide it. Humanitarian actors will need to negotiate with more actors with diverging interests, while still partnering with and supporting local communities. Affected populations in urban areas will be less visible and more integrated into complex political, social and economic structures. Humanitarian actors will increasingly face security incidents, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and data breaches that risk harm to vulnerable populations and

21. United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, [Shining a Light on Internal Displacement – A Vision for the Future](#), September 2021.

22. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2020](#), 18 June 2021.

23. Ibid.

24. United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, [Shining a Light on Internal Displacement – A Vision for the Future, Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#), September 2021.

25. Ibid.



People queue long hours to collect water in the Kaharey IDP site, in Somalia's Doolow District. OCHA/Yao Chen

weaken trust.<sup>26</sup> Rising geopolitical tensions will continue to hamper access while eroding international law and norms.

Marginalized and minority communities will be at greatest risk and in most need of assistance and protection. A long history of colonialism, racial and gender discrimination, and intolerance has resulted in power structures, institutions and decision-making harmful to marginalized and minority communities. Humanitarian crises can exacerbate sexism, racism, ableism, ageism, and other forms of stigmatization and discrimination. Risks disproportionately affect people who suffer from structural inequities, including women and girls, children and youth, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced persons and

migrants, persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), indigenous peoples, and urban poor and rural communities. Women and girls will face increased gender-based violence because of growing food insecurity, climate events and conflict. Older women, adolescent girls and those with disabilities are at particular risk. People with diverse SOGIESC, and in some contexts men and boys, are also vulnerable.

Humanitarians will need to navigate the delivery of assistance in societies with higher levels of mistrust. Recent years have left populations feeling insecure, uncertain and distrustful of institutions and Governments.<sup>27</sup> Facilitated by technology, many populations gravitate towards groups with shared values,

26. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [From Digital Promise to Frontline Practice: New and Emerging Technologies in Humanitarian Action](#), 2021.

27. United Nations, [Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General](#), 2021.

identities, causes or grievances.<sup>28</sup> This trend can give rise to powerful social movements for change but also lead to polarization, societal divisions, mistrust of institutions, hatred and violence.<sup>29</sup> Cyberattacks and disinformation can further influence populations, exploit divisions, undermine facts or fuel mistrust in public institutions.<sup>30</sup> Humanitarian actors will need to navigate a landscape with enormous volumes of data, including personal and other sensitive data, and increasing levels of mistrust, misinformation and disinformation.

Technology will present new opportunities and risks for vulnerable populations and humanitarian actors.<sup>31</sup> Artificial intelligence can help analyse and interpret vast, complex data sets to improve projections and decision-making. Mobile applications, chatbots and social media can create immediate feedback loops with affected communities. Digital cash can provide rapid and flexible assistance. At the same time, inadequate data responsibility can cause harm and generate mistrust. Inequities in connectivity, access to technology and digital literacy can exacerbate vulnerabilities and intensify gender and other biases. Incomplete data sets can lead to digital discrimination. Humanitarian

actors must embrace technology for faster and more effective humanitarian action, while ensuring the protection of lives, dignity, rights and freedoms.<sup>32</sup>

Humanitarian actors will need to seek new opportunities to connect with partners who improve the lives of the most vulnerable people. Many local, national, regional and international actors, in both the public and private sector, are working to secure a better future for people and the planet. Investments in governance, social protection, digitalization, disaster risk reduction and the green economy have the power to save lives and livelihoods, lift people out of poverty, and create access to new markets and opportunities. To better connect with these positive trends, actors and financing streams, humanitarian actors must better understand and support national and local capacities and structures; engage with partners across the HDP nexus and beyond to bring programmes and financing into fragile settings earlier; and ensure basic services are aligned with humanitarian values and reduce risk and vulnerability for people most in need to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind.

## THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Three decades after the creation of the international coordination architecture, humanitarian operations have become more effective. Investments in leadership, strategic planning, coordination structures and information management have enabled the international humanitarian system to prevent famine-like

conditions, bring disease outbreaks under control, respond to displacement and ensure access. Quality, cohesiveness and responsiveness have improved due to reform agendas such as the cluster approach in 2005, the Transformative Agenda in 2010 and the Grand Bargain in 2016.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [From Digital Promise to Frontline Practice: New and Emerging Technologies in Humanitarian Action](#), 2021.

32. United Nations, [Roadmap for Digital Cooperation – Report of the Secretary-General](#), June 2020.

However, a more effective and impact-oriented response that puts people and their needs at the centre is needed. Despite improvements, evaluations and reviews call for a more impact- and solution-oriented approach. For example, the international humanitarian system has better coordinated sectoral inputs, but it needs to be more inclusive,<sup>33</sup> move towards more multisectoral responses, and adapt its approach and modalities to local contexts and the priorities of affected communities.<sup>34</sup> Humanitarian actors listen to people in crisis more, but they fall short of systematically including local actors and affected communities in the response. Response speed and quality have improved, but the international community still struggles to act even before predictable crises, as well as over longer time frames to mitigate impacts.<sup>35</sup> Despite considerable effort to make protection central to the humanitarian response, it is still widely understood as a sectoral activity. Instead, it needs to be approached as a collective responsibility and strategic outcome for the entire humanitarian system. The growing response machinery has allowed humanitarian actors to better assess needs and mobilize resources, but it has also reduced flexibility.

The international humanitarian system is at a critical juncture. Without continuous adaptation, the sector will not have the agility, capacity or skills to respond to a growing number of crises in a manner appropriate to local populations and contexts. The time to act is now. Many UN agencies and humanitarian organizations have begun to adapt, but the

international humanitarian system needs to pull together firmly and in the same direction.

**The trends and implications described above will require an international humanitarian system that:**

- **Saves lives**, strengthens community resilience and reduces humanitarian need. The definition of success must go beyond enabling survival to improving outcomes for people in and at risk of crises. Objectives will vary by context, but they should strengthen community resilience and reduce risk, vulnerability and need wherever possible.
- **Is agile, effective, prioritized and solution focused.** Facing a growing and increasingly unpredictable number of crises, humanitarian action must be geared to context, local priorities and capacities, and desired impact. Investments in business continuity must ensure that systems – from supply chain management to data processing – are resilient to shocks.
- **Embodies humanitarian values and principles.** As the need for aid keeps expanding and new and diverse actors take part in the response, humanitarian workers should promote a principled approach according to core humanitarian standards and values. A primary commitment is to ensure communities and crisis-affected people are not negatively impacted by humanitarian assistance, and appropriate measures are in place to protect them from

33. Overseas Development Institute, [Humanitarian Policy Group: Inclusion and Exclusion in Humanitarian Action: Findings from a Three-year Study](#), 12 July 2022.

34. Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network, [MOPAN Assessment Report: OCHA, 2020 Assessment Cycle](#), 2021; Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group, [The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation \(IAHE\) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls](#), October 2020; Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group, [Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique](#), July 2020; Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group, [Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Drought Response in Ethiopia 2015 – 2018](#), November 2019; United Nations, [Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future. Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#), September 2021; Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance, [The State of the Humanitarian System](#), 2018.

35. For example: United Nations, [Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future. Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#), September 2021; United Nations, [Sustaining the Ambition: Delivering Change, Agenda for Humanity Annual Synthesis Report](#), December 2019; Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance, [The State of the Humanitarian System](#), 2018.



sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and other forms of misconduct.

- **Acts early to contribute to longer-term outcomes.** Foreseeable climate and other shocks coupled with shrinking resources require technological advances to act early, supported by predictable and adequate financing ahead of crises. Longer-term approaches, working with local partners and across HDP sectors and beyond, can ensure that planning, programming and financing will support community priorities.
- **Reinforces local responses and is accountable to affected populations.** Planning, programming, coordination and financing must focus on community priorities and support local responses, which are often more effective, efficient and sustainable. Participation and decision-making by affected communities and local actors must

be strengthened, while international actors must be accountable for the impact of the response on people's lives. Accountability to Affected People entails sharing adequate information with communities, supporting meaningful participation and leadership of affected people, and ensuring appropriate community feedback systems are in place.<sup>36</sup>

- **Embodies diversity, equity and inclusion.** To ensure people most at risk can access assistance and protection, the humanitarian sector must identify marginalized groups, ensure their participation, and tailor programmes to their specific risks and needs. Such groups include women and girls, children and youth, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced persons and migrants, persons with diverse SOGIESC, indigenous peoples, and urban poor and rural commu-

This 91-year-old woman received a food package from the NGO Proliska, thanks to support from the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund. OCHA/Matteo Minasi

36. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Accountability to Affected People](#).

nities. The sector must provide equitable assistance to all affected regions, change its organizational culture, and challenge historical power imbalances, institutional discrimination and entrenched biases to ensure it is diverse, equitable, inclusive and anti-racist.

- **Ensures gender underpins action.** More than 60 per cent of people displaced by crises are women and girls, confronted by myriad barriers to protection and participation. Humanitarian actors must be better informed about gender dynamics and power imbalances and their impact on access to assistance and decision-making. They must better understand intersectionalities, i.e., how gender, race, age, ability, religion and other factors intersect to influence humanitarian needs. They must protect women and girls from gender-based violence. And they must promote and reinforce the voices, leadership, agency and decision-making of women and women-led organizations, who are essential first responders in humanitarian action.
- **Puts protection at the centre, understands who, how and when to influence, and speaks up in a bold, timely and principled manner.** More complex crises require a holistic and sophisticated understanding of risks and drivers of harm and needs, and of political and socioeconomic landscapes. OCHA will work with humanitarian partners to ensure the centrality of protection in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) and to push for better protection outcomes, including through engagement with development, human rights, and peace and security actors. As actors push the boundaries of international laws, rules and norms, the humanitarian community must strengthen its analysis of protection threats and risks, speak out on violations, change the behaviours that create harm, and defend the needs, rights and priorities of the people it serves.
- **Strategically generates and uses finance based on community priorities.** Market- and non-market-based opportunities should be explored boldly and creatively to grow early and adequate financing for local partners, including through private sector participation. Coherent investment strategies must bring together HDP and climate financing at the global and country levels. Humanitarian actors should take on a greater analytical and advocacy role — as a shared responsibility with development actors — to direct climate and development financing towards places and people most vulnerable to crises.
- **Embraces new and emerging technology while guarding against risks.** The humanitarian system should make use of technology while ensuring it is responsive, sustainable, inclusive and protective of human life and dignity. Humanitarian organizations must invest in their own systems and processes to ensure protection of the data of staff and the populations they serve.



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CHAPTER

02

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**THE EMERGENCY  
RELIEF COORDINATOR'S  
LEADERSHIP AND OCHA'S  
IDENTITY**

## THE EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR'S LEADERSHIP

To effectively serve people affected by crises, leadership must respond to the requirements of today while preparing for the challenges and realities of tomorrow. Leaders from Member States, affected communities and the international humanitarian system must navigate the uncertainty of the present and future humanitarian landscape. They will need to understand emerging risks and their implications for vulnerable communities and humanitarian action. And they will have to work with a broad range of partners to identify solutions and catalyse change.

Thirty years ago, Member States adopting General Assembly (GA) resolution 46/182 had the foresight to recognize that the UN system “needs to be adapted and strength-

ened to meet present and future challenges in an effective and coherent manner.”<sup>37</sup> They tasked the UN Secretary-General to lead this transformation, working closely with the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).<sup>38</sup> From the outset, the ERC’s core mandate has included rapid and coherent response; actively facilitating access, including through negotiation if needed; assisting in the mobilization of resources; systematic pooling and analysis of information; and actively promoting the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction.<sup>39</sup> At the country level, the ERC provides leadership to and supports the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) to ensure a rapid, coherent and effective field response.<sup>40</sup>



**General Assembly resolution 46/182:** OCHA’s mandate is to support the ERC in working closely with the Secretary-General and in cooperation with humanitarian organizations and entities to coordinate the humanitarian response to major and complex emergencies. This work includes: (a) processing requests from affected Member States for emergency assistance; (b) maintaining an overview of all emergencies; (c) organizing joint inter-agency needs-assessment missions and preparing consolidated appeals followed by periodic situation reports; (d) facilitating access for the rapid provision of emergency assistance; (e) managing the central emergency revolving fund [now known as the Central Emergency Response Fund] and assisting in the mobilization of resources; (f) serving as a central focal point for emergency relief operations, including as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC); (g) providing consolidated information, including early warning; and (h) actively promoting the transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction. At the country level, the ERC’s role is to maintain close contact with and provide leadership to the UN Resident Coordinators on matters relating to humanitarian assistance.<sup>41</sup>

37. United Nations General Assembly, [Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations](#), A/46/182, OP12, 19 December 1991.

38. United Nations General Assembly, [Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance](#): Report of the Secretary-General, A/76/74–E/2021/54, 14 April 2021.

39. United Nations General Assembly, [Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations](#), A/46/182, OP33, 35, 19 December 1991.

40. United Nations General Assembly, [Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations](#), A/46/182, OP39, 19 December 1991.

41. United Nations General Assembly, [Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations](#), A/46/182, OP35, 19 December 1991.

The ERC is uniquely placed to provide bold, catalytic and collaborative leadership in today's crises and to adapt the system to tomorrow's challenges. The ERC and the Deputy ERC sit within the UN Secretariat, at the intersection of the international humanitarian system and political institutions, and they can bring about a shared and holistic understanding of a crisis. By engaging with humanitarian partners, Member States, national and local stakeholders, development and peace actors, and political organizations, the ERC can advocate, convene, influence and find solutions for people in and at risk of crisis. As convenor and Chair of the IASC, the ERC can bring together a wide network of partners to create a common understanding of problems, priorities and solutions to ensure a coherent, system-wide response.

OCHA supports the ERC through leadership and coordination. OCHA was established to support and extend the ERC's leadership, enabling the ERC, HCs and humanitarian partners to achieve the most effective and highest quality response possible for people in and at risk of crisis.

### OCHA'S FIVE CORE FUNCTIONS

With its partners, OCHA contributes to principled and effective humanitarian response through its five core functions: Coordination, Advocacy and Communications, Humanitarian Financing, Policy and Information Management. Managing results across these functions will be crucial to the delivery of the Plan's transformational priorities (see chapter C) over the next four years.

At just six months old, Abdulrahman Yaser was admitted to the malnutrition ward at Al-Sadaqah Hospital in Aden, Yemen. He suffered from severe acute malnutrition and weighed only 2.8 kg.

OCHA/Matteo Minasi



1. **Coordination:** OCHA's mission is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. OCHA advocates for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all. It coordinates response to expand the reach of humanitarian action, improve prioritization and reduce duplication, thereby ensuring that assistance and protection reach the people who need it most. OCHA fosters effective and appropriate linkages with other actors to deliver on its mission.
2. **Advocacy and communications:** OCHA's public and private advocacy raises awareness of forgotten crises, promotes respect for international humanitarian law, brings the voices of crisis-affected people to the forefront and helps people access assistance. OCHA galvanizes the global conscience to spur action that addresses the risks, vulnerabilities and needs of affected populations, and it promotes respect for rights, norms and principles relevant to assistance and protection.
3. **Humanitarian financing:** OCHA aims to mobilize and engage the full range of financing instruments, mechanisms and partners to meet growing needs, promote leadership and coordination mechanisms at the country level, and ensure global humanitarian financing mechanisms complement each other and are coherent with development funding. OCHA mobilizes and provides strategic, catalytic and coherent financing for outcomes that improve lives. It supports diverse, flexible and multi-year financing arrangements and tools to adapt to changing crises.
4. **Policy:** Through trends analysis and foresight, OCHA leads in developing policy to improve humanitarian action and decision-making. OCHA helps set the agenda for the sector's reform and effectiveness in response to the shifting global landscape, new global frameworks, and increased capacities of national Governments and local actors. OCHA also promotes and strengthens the normative framework for international humanitarian action and the protection of civilians in armed conflict.
5. **Information management:** OCHA provides information management services to the humanitarian community to inform rapid, effective and principled responses. It gathers, shares and uses data and information to underpin coordination, decision-making and advocacy.

## OCHA'S IDENTITY: WHAT WE STAND FOR

Over the next four years, OCHA will continue to help the humanitarian system adapt to emerging trends and challenges, including by delivering on the Plan's transformational priorities (see chapter C). In addition to the humanitarian principles, OCHA's core values will guide the organization in becoming more efficient, effective, equitable, inclusive, transparent and accountable to the people it serves:

- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** OCHA's coordination enables a rapid, inclusive and coherent response that effectively saves lives, reduces suffering and strengthens community resilience. OCHA prioritizes flexible, context-specific mechanisms that focus on the needs and priorities of affected people and contribute to solutions.
- **Leadership and accountability:** OCHA's leadership brings the organization together to deliver on the Plan's transformational



priorities. Humanitarian actors and leadership are accountable to and supportive of people affected by crises. Managers are accountable for staff well-being and responsible for fostering a culture consistent with the values of the UN.

- **Equity and inclusion:** OCHA responds to the needs of the most at-risk and marginalized people. It is unequivocally committed to reducing harm, vulnerability, inequality, discrimination and exclusion as a critical step towards achieving the SDGs.
- **Gender equality:** OCHA works towards achieving gender equality and empowers women and girls in line with the Policy Instruction on Gender Equality 2021-2025. OCHA applies a gender lens to analysis and action, and it enhances the meaningful participation of women across all levels of decision-making, planning, programming, coordination, advocacy and financing.
- **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment:** OCHA is firmly committed to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH). As Chair of the IASC, the ERC plays a key role in driving progress on PSEAH across the humanitarian system, in line with the IASC Vision and Strategy on PSEAH 2022-2026. The RC/HC has system-wide responsibility for developing collective PSEAH strategies and ensuring that a country action plan is developed and implemented annually.
- **Centrality of protection:** OCHA is committed to protecting the lives, livelihoods, rights and dignity of all affected people, including through resource mobilization and advocacy.

OCHA prioritizes the response to and the mitigation and prevention of gender-based violence.

An OCHA emergency response team member speaks with a woman waiting with her sons for a health consultation at the Médecins du Monde mobile clinic in Mananjary, Madagascar.  
OCHA/Viviane Rakotoarivony

- cacy and by placing protection at the centre of the humanitarian response.
- **Climate neutrality and resilience:** OCHA promotes a mindset shift across the humanitarian sector to maximize environmental sustainability of humanitarian operations and enable analysis, planning and programming that contributes to community resilience.
- **Catalyst for change and convener of solutions:** OCHA creates a shared understanding of global risks and challenges and their implications, catalysing adaptation across the humanitarian system to ensure better outcomes for people at risk of crisis today and tomorrow. OCHA convenes, connects and influences stakeholders, voices and partners to achieve effective and appropriate outcomes, policies and solutions.



A four-year-old boy and his mother at Ukraine's border with Romania, where they fled to from Kyiv.  
UNICEF/Alexandru Nicodim

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CHAPTER

03

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OCHA'S SIX  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
PRIORITIES FOR  
2023-2026

## OCHA's six transformational priorities for 2023-2026



A coherent humanitarian response that is people centred, context specific, contributes to community resilience and promotes concrete protection outcomes

.....



Systematic and predictable leadership on access

.....



Durable solutions to protracted internal displacement



Humanitarian response that is inclusive and leaves no one behind

.....



Catalytic humanitarian financing that delivers impact in people's lives

.....



Strategic analysis of risks and trends to adapt to an evolving landscape

To address the six trends and their implications for humanitarian needs and response described in chapter A, OCHA will direct its leadership and energy towards six transformational priorities in 2023-2026. These priorities are only part of OCHA's work over the next four years, all of which will be captured in the Strategic Results Framework and annual workplans. While the transformational priorities are already within OCHA's mandate and scope of work, they will require dedicated and heightened attention over the next four years and will be translated into operational practice through implementation plans.

Each subsection below states the urgent need for change, defines the problem and commits OCHA to taking steps to resolve it.

### 1

#### **A coherent humanitarian response that is people centred, context specific, contributes to community resilience and promotes concrete protection outcomes**

The international humanitarian response system is being stretched beyond capacity as it tries to respond to greater and more protracted needs in more complex envi-

ronments but with insufficient resources. Concurrently, crisis-affected people and other local actors rightfully demand a say in the type of assistance they receive and how it is provided. While women and girls comprise more than half of the affected population, they continue to be gravely underserved and underrepresented in decision-making.

The cluster approach, the HPC and other innovations have improved the predictability, accountability, timeliness and quality of humanitarian assistance. However, key challenges remain.

First, the architecture relies on the systematic deployment of clusters regardless of the type of crisis, priorities of communities, or response capacity. Coordination revolves around responders and sectors, which fragments needs, aid delivery and funding into silos, creates a supply-driven system and encourages an outsized international footprint. Second, international organizations largely decide priorities and programmes without adequate input from affected communities and local actors. Third, donors want to disburse large sums quickly with tangible results, which favours large international organizations and leaves little time to consult





affected people or enable local actors to lead. Fourth, the growth of the coordination architecture, combined with greater rigour in needs analysis, response planning and monitoring, has led to technical, human-resource-intensive processes. A wide range of working groups, guidelines, tools and protocols has left humanitarian actors feeling they spend more time serving the bureaucracy than people. Finally, the humanitarian community has struggled over the types of programmes and services to provide, as well as collaboration with actors using non-humanitarian sources of funding, leading to inconsistent approaches in the field.

These persistent challenges indicate that the coordination architecture does not sufficiently respond to the priorities of affected people, support local actors to lead responses, or ensure that no one is left behind (see chapter C.IV.). This system is also too cost-inefficient to be sustainable in the face of the growing quantity and variety of crises.

Objective: Develop new and scalable approaches for coordination that are inclusive and context specific, contribute to community resilience, put people and their needs at the centre, and promote concrete protection outcomes. These approaches should respect, engage and empower local actors in a more structured and consistent manner to achieve a lighter, more effective and sustainable response.

Based on a holistic assessment of local capacity and people's risks, needs and priorities, OCHA, across its five core functions, will lead and collaborate with humanitarian partners, donors and other stakeholders – including through advocacy plans to support OCHA's reform work – to move the coordination architecture in the following directions:

1. A coordinated humanitarian response will begin with understanding the needs and

Children smile at the camera in Spin Boldak district, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.  
UNICEF/Sayed Maroof Hamdard

priorities of all affected communities and the local capacities to address them. To put affected communities and their needs at the centre, coordination will begin with engaging affected communities (such as local actors, community representatives including women, and development, peace and climate actors where appropriate) to holistically understand needs, risks and priorities from their perspective. The humanitarian response and a leaner coordination system will be based on community needs and capacities. This approach will include strengthened analysis to identify drivers of harm, climate threats and risks, gender and risk factors, including SEAH, and local drivers of exclusion that marginalize vulnerable people. Analysis will not only identify what the needs and drivers are but also how best to collectively respond to them via feasibility analyses in line with the preferences of affected people. It will assess national and local capacity that exists to respond to those priorities, or that could emerge with international support. Ongoing community engagement will ensure that planning and programming are course-corrected as risks, needs and priorities evolve. All actors will agree to common outcomes that respond to the affected population's priorities, forming the basis of the humanitarian response plan as well as longer-term plans. Common outcomes will identify opportunities for more joined-up approaches to meet basic needs, including multipurpose cash and linkages to longer-term social protection systems. Strengthened regional offices and deep field presence will ensure a more local analysis and response that prioritizes community needs and thereby enables a more agile and context-specific response and better Accountability to Affected People.

2. Tailored and context-specific coordination models will be based on national and local capacity. Each coordination model will adhere to broad principles but be designed according to the following considerations: (a) national and local capacity to coordinate and deliver on the common outcomes; (b) international help required to build and support national and local capacity and services; (c) a light international footprint and simple coordination model focused on bringing added value; and (d) adaptability as community priorities and national and local capacities change.
3. Coordination will be guided by a focus on resilience, predictability and anticipation.

**Strengthening community resilience:**

Humanitarian assistance should contribute to community resilience, including to climate risks and threats. This imperative is particularly important in protracted crises and should come ahead of foreseeable shocks, where possible. OCHA's coordination role will ensure humanitarian efforts respond more clearly to local priorities and build on local capacities. Community resilience is key to achieving the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

**Predictability:** The HC will continue to coordinate the international humanitarian response, including by providing core services that enable a global, national and subnational picture of needs to inform predictable, solutions-friendly responses and identification of gaps using a robust, evidence-based methodology alongside development actors. The coordination system needs to be reliable, context specific and people centred, while promoting concrete protection outcomes.

**Anticipation:** Ahead of predictable crises, OCHA will facilitate, generate evidence for



and scale up collective anticipatory action and other forward-looking and risk-informed approaches. OCHA's coordination role will ensure a coherent and embedded approach to this work in the humanitarian system.

4. Cash will be predictably and effectively coordinated. In light of OCHA's global leadership on cash coordination, cash will be used whenever feasible and appropriate, and coordinated effectively. Multipurpose cash can support a less siloed, more integrated, flexible and effective response that places agency and flexibility in the hands of people most impacted by crisis.
5. Country-led pilots, based on local assistance and protection priorities and capacities, will develop context-specific coordination models.

The pilots will aim to develop original country- or area-based coordination and response solutions that:

- are clearly centred around and accountable to affected people

- consider gender vulnerabilities and other communities at risk
- are driven by (and respond to) affected populations' priority needs and protection risks
- build on the capacities and representation of affected and local populations
- are tailored to context and lean.

These coordination and response solutions must also:

- strengthen community resilience and reduce risks and vulnerabilities
- increase access to basic services and sustainable livelihoods
- improve the collective understanding of what people need and want, which should inform achievement of collective, concrete and tangible protection outcomes and reduce protection risks for affected people.

6. Recognizing that evolving the coordination architecture will take time and depend on the commitment of donors and humanitarian partners, OCHA will take three immediate steps:

A woman holds her 5-year-old son, who smiles after receiving his measles vaccination in a health clinic in southern Venezuela. OCHA/Gemma Cortes

- **Simplify the HPC:** OCHA will work with the IASC to lighten the HPC process as a first step towards a new coordination framework. Measures will include reducing inputs through simplified methodologies and outputs through shortened documents. Another focus will be factors that contribute to reducing or ending international humanitarian action.
- **Lead the development of principles of good coordination:** OCHA will work with partners to develop principles of good coordination that will allow HCs and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) to apply flexible models that fit specific contexts, while ensuring predictable and quality coordination with clear accountability lines.
- **Support HCs and partners to make the shift:** OCHA will support and prepare HCs and partners to implement an agile, people-centred, inclusive and locally driven approach to coordination, while equipping HCs with the tools to ensure solutions-friendly responses.<sup>42</sup>

## 2

### SYSTEMATIC AND PREDICTABLE LEADERSHIP ON ACCESS

The number of people living in areas unable to access humanitarian assistance, services and protection is expected to increase over the next decade. Humanitarian engagement with parties to conflict will be complicated by the rapid growth of humanitarian operations, the multiplication and fragmentation of State and non-State actors in crises, the transnational nature of conflicts, growing geopolitical tensions and rising mistrust fuelled by misinformation. Blatant disregard of international humanitarian law on the one hand, and restrictive laws and practices in some areas (including counter-terrorism) on the other will further undermine humanitarian access. Expectations from UN agencies and NGOs for the ERC, HCs and OCHA to lead in facilitating and coordinating access, including negotiations with parties to conflict and communication with affected communities, will continue to rise.

OCHA has sought to expand services to partners seeking access. However, investment and engagement often depend on the comfort levels of global and national leadership to engage with parties to conflict and manage politics, and on capacities and resources. Consequently, humanitarian partners have been unable to rely on predictable services from OCHA on access constraints, while OCHA has been unable to make long-term investments.

Access is a prerequisite of protection and assistance for people in need. It is also elemental to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. Across the organization, OCHA must make facilitating and supporting access in every context a top priority. It must move from an ad hoc approach to one that is systematic, providing the ERC and humanitarian partners with predictable, sustained and effective support.

42. Such support and preparation will include promoting Accountability to Affected People and access capacity in the field; reviewing the allocation of OCHA's footprint between capital and sub-office capacity; regular engagement and consultation to adapt the coordination architecture; applying the new IASC Cash Coordination Model; and investing in training and skills development, including mentoring a small group of RC/HCs in pilot countries.



**Objective: More people in need have access to humanitarian assistance, protection and basic services in a timely, predictable and sustained manner.**

To achieve this objective, OCHA, across its five core functions, will deliver the following during 2023-2026:

1. Conduct successful humanitarian negotiations and renewed humanitarian diplomacy. At the global and field levels, OCHA will engage with all relevant stakeholders to help unblock access constraints and ensure the most vulnerable people have predictable and systematic access to assistance and protection, including through commodity access and customs negotiations. OCHA will also reinvigorate strategic partnerships with Member States and regional entities that can support access efforts, particularly in conflict environments. OCHA will strengthen communication with militaries and armed groups, including through its civil-military coordination services, to raise

awareness of humanitarian principles and help change behaviour towards vulnerable civilians, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and ethnic and religious minorities.

2. Ensure that the ERC, HCs and OCHA country offices are visible, predictable and consistent advocates, at the global and country levels, for people in need to access humanitarian assistance, protection and basic services. OCHA will utilize the data and analysis it produces to strengthen private and public advocacy by the ERC and humanitarian partners, as well as UN Security Council engagement and media outreach. Negotiated access must then unlock humanitarian action for affected communities.

A team of humanitarian workers visits the location of a new IDP site in Bujari, a few kilometres from Goma, in eastern DRC. The site will be home to around 1,200 people affected by the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo. OCHA/Alioune N'Diaye

On both sides of the Cambodia–Vietnam border, women and children at risk of trafficking benefited from education programmes, vocational training and income-generating activities as part of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. UN/Christopher Reardon

3. Increase OCHA’s institutional capacity to lead on access, including civil-military coordination. To ensure it can support the ERC’s mandate, OCHA will strengthen accountability of HCs, OCHA heads of office and management to deliver on the above commitments; strengthen institutional coherence, including by aligning OCHA’s budget and capacity; make access a priority in results-based management; invest in the skills of all staff on access and humanitarian negotiations; and immediately update the Minimum Package of Services on Access and ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to deliver on it.
4. Increase communication and engagement with communities and provide predictable services regarding access, including civil-military coordination, to the ERC and

humanitarian partners. To better understand access constraints and facilitate decision-making and negotiations by the ERC and partners, in all operations OCHA will provide a standard suite of access products and services in support of principled humanitarian action. Products will include conflict and stakeholder analysis to understand who, how and when to influence; analysis of access constraints and access severity mapping, including global mapping of constraints and sources of hindrances; access snapshots; coordination platforms, such as access working groups, where partners can jointly develop coherent approaches; and policy expertise to navigate operational challenges. OCHA will invest in new technologies and partnerships to ensure these products draw on the best data and analysis available. Emphasis



will be on boosting two-way communications with affected communities to build acceptance, as well as to inform access approaches and the overall response.

5. Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders within and beyond the humanitarian community. OCHA will continue to invest in and build a wide network of partnerships with data and country experts, academics and think tanks, specialists in negotiations, and others from the humanitarian sector and beyond, including the private sector. Strengthened regional offices, deep field presence and other measures will build up partnerships with local stakeholders, including women leaders and women's networks, in order to better understand

local contexts, conflict dynamics and actors of influence.

6. Be a thought leader and convenor on humanitarian access. OCHA will bring humanitarian and other stakeholders together to identify policy and operational challenges that require country-level or system-wide thinking. This process will support the development of innovative solutions in an inclusive way. To support the identification of challenges and solutions, OCHA will build innovative platforms and tools to systematically collect lessons learned and good practices, sharing knowledge across the organization and with partners.

### 3

## DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO PROTRACTED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

The number of IDPs has doubled over the past decade, reaching an all-time high of more than 59 million by the end of 2021. Displacement is increasingly long term, as protracted conflicts displace millions of people for a decade or longer, with little progress towards self-sufficiency and durable solutions. This growing human and economic toll, along with the need to alleviate an overstretched humanitarian system, demands stepped-up efforts towards durable solutions.

The ERC has a core mandate at the centre of the coordination of protection and assistance for IDPs.<sup>43</sup> However, OCHA's role in supporting durable solutions as part of that mandate has not been well-defined or consistent across

operations. A growing expectation for OCHA to play a leading role demands clarified responsibilities and competencies, along with increased engagement and leadership at the global and country levels. Opportunities for progress on solutions include the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, which assigns OCHA a leading role through its inclusion in the new Steering Group on Solutions that will operate at global and country levels;<sup>44</sup> the designation of UN RCs as country-level leads on driving durable solutions across the HDP nexus within the UN; and the upcoming IASC review of responses to internal displacement that will, *inter alia*, explore how humanitarian action can lay better groundwork for durable solutions.

43. United Nations General Assembly, [Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa: Report of the Secretary-General](#), A/70/165, 21 July 2015.

44. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is to take this role alongside United Nations Development Coordination Office, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organization for Migration.



**Objective: Facilitate IDPs' access to durable solutions, including basic services, in collaboration with national and development actors.**

To achieve this objective, OCHA, across its five core functions, will build on existing innovative practices at the country level and deliver the following during 2023-2026:

1. Develop a global vision and institutional plan. As tasked by the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on IDPs, OCHA will develop a clear institutional plan and vision that will articulate its role in seeking durable solutions at the country level. Efforts will include OCHA support for UN RC-led efforts towards solutions, headquarters' support for that role across OCHA's five core functions, and scaling up the required internal capacities and engagement. OCHA will strengthen its capacity to advise HCs, ensure adequate and effective assistance and protection to displaced populations, and seek durable solutions at the country level.

2. Advocate for durable solutions for IDPs in all their diversities at the global level. OCHA will work with the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement and leverage the ERC's leadership role to advocate for and mobilize collective action and financing across the HDP nexus. This effort will focus on particularly conducive country situations.
3. Use OCHA's role as custodian of the HPC to advance solutions. OCHA will ensure that humanitarian responses consistently lay the groundwork for durable solutions. Efforts should include advocacy in support of programmatic areas such as the recovery of civil documentation or access to health care, education and livelihoods; targeted programming for women and girls, children and youth, and other groups at risk; and

Displaced Somali children sing under a tree in the sprawling Kaxareey displacement settlement in Doolow, Somalia. Some 15,000 displaced families live in the settlement, which is less than a mile from the Ethiopian border. OCHA/Giles Clarke





access to adequate housing, land and property, with consideration of climate risks and threats. IDPs should receive equitable treatment in all geographic locations, and solutions should consider all voices, including every family member.

4. Ensure complementarity of HDP sector interventions for IDPs. To advocate for affected populations that require development solutions, and to ensure complementarity with humanitarian action, OCHA will engage in joint HDP analysis, participate in strategic prioritization processes with all UN Country Teams (UNCTs), contribute to the formulation of collective outcomes and leverage humanitarian data. OCHA will also facilitate joint analysis, coordination, coherence and complementarity with peace actors, including UN peace operations.
5. Facilitate the coordination of durable solutions at the country level. In appropriate contexts, at the country level (including sub-national and local levels) OCHA will
6. Develop good practices, knowledge, guidance and training. Building on prior efforts and using its co-chairmanship of the GP2.0 Global Platform on Internal Displacement, OCHA will systematically gather, disseminate and ensure access to lessons learned and good practices on durable solutions. OCHA will lead the development of guidance and training for OCHA and the humanitarian community on how humanitarian action can advance durable solutions. This effort will build on the growing body of training, knowledge and good practices, as well as on the insights and recommendations to emerge from the independent IASC review on humanitarian responses to internal displacement.

## 4

### HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE THAT IS INCLUSIVE AND LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

In a crisis, all segments of the community – women, girls, men and boys of all ages and diversities – are at risk. However, marginalized groups, including women and girls, children and youth, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced persons and migrants, persons with diverse SOGIESC, indigenous peoples, and urban poor and rural communities, are often more vulnerable to further discrimination, threats, exploitation and access constraints. The ongoing climate crisis strikes amid extreme inequality, posing additional risks to long-term equity and social mobility. Those contributing

the least to the climate crisis – the poor, the marginalized and those suffering from structural inequities – are set to suffer the most.

Humanitarian action must ensure – including through a people-centred coordination model (see chapter C.I.) – that the most vulnerable are not excluded, discriminated against, or further harmed or marginalized. The risk of exclusion from assistance and protection depends on context and community, requiring an approach that considers who is marginalized, understands people's unique needs, tailors programmes to meet them and ensures

45. The Steering Group on Solutions is tasked at the country level with providing predictable support to UN RCs.

participation in decision-making. Failure to do so violates the humanitarian principles, reduces effectiveness, impedes community acceptance and leaves the most vulnerable further behind. Humanitarian actors must not exacerbate inequalities, instead prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable and rectifying discriminatory practices and historical power imbalances.

Inclusive humanitarian action must be impartial, providing assistance and protection without discrimination, except based on severity of need; equitable, where all individuals have fair access to services and assistance; catered to diverse needs, with programmes tailored to the risks, status and needs of marginalized or discriminated groups; and participatory, allowing people to express their needs, preferences and priorities, and to participate in the response.<sup>46</sup>

However, despite growing efforts, several factors have hampered the ability to identify, assist and protect people most in need or to tailor programmes to their needs and risks. First, humanitarians often fail to consider a population's unique characteristics that may compound risks and vulnerabilities or require specific needs to be met. A lack of prioritization of gender, age, disability, ethnicity and other risk factors has sustained a system unaccountable to the affected population. More holistic, intersectional and deep analysis is needed to dive into the drivers of threat, risk and need, and the many factors that affect humanitarian access and assistance.

Guidance and thematic or population group expertise have emerged to fill the gap but have not consistently produced the desired outcomes. Too often, the effort to include groups at risk is reduced to a checklist or viewed as optional and dependent on funding specialists. A plethora of thematic advisers have emerged, but they alone are not a sustainable solution. What is needed is a systems approach that considers how diverse identity factors interact to create specific vulnerabilities, risks and needs. The humanitarian system must put the affected population at the centre of any response, while developing the skills for an intersectional threat and risk analysis that considers gender, age, disability, ethnicity and other factors.

Second, an impartial humanitarian response is viewed as a technical issue rather than one that requires continuous leadership at the global and field levels to identify and understand who may be marginalized or discriminated against, and to enable affected people to express their needs, priorities and capabilities. Third, there is a lack of monitoring, evaluation and accountability on whether a response has made every effort to ensure that assistance and protection reach the most vulnerable and in need. Finally, international humanitarian leadership, decision-making structures and staff constituency have not reflected the diversity of the populations served. This can lead to a blindness about the population's unique characteristics and perpetuate marginalization or exclusion.

46. This definition of inclusive humanitarian action draws on Overseas Development Institute, [Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action: the state of play](#), 25 November 2020.



**Objective: Participatory, inclusive, gender-responsive and principled humanitarian action that leaves no one behind.**

To achieve this objective, OCHA, across its five core functions, will deliver the following during 2023-2026:

1. Prioritize and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in emergencies. The ERC and OCHA will strengthen efforts to implement commitments across OCHA and the humanitarian system to advance gender equality and strengthen accountability for women and girls. This requires strengthened efforts to achieve OCHA's three corporate priorities on gender equality: driving robust gender analysis; prioritizing the response to and the mitigation and prevention of gender-based violence; and promoting women's participation and leadership in decision-making.
2. Provide advocacy and leadership to hold the system accountable for an impartial humanitarian response. The ERC and OCHA will provide leadership and advocacy to make analysis and response more inclusive, gender responsive, impartial, equitable and participatory, to ensure the centrality of protection and Accountability to Affected People, and to cater to the diverse, inter-sectoral and rapidly changing needs and preferences of populations in crisis. They will underscore that this effort is the responsibility of all humanitarian organizations, leaders and staff, and of local and national authorities and donors.
3. Facilitate the development of a holistic approach that ensures no one is left behind. OCHA will work with partners, including

This woman and her family have been displaced in Shing Jai camp since 2011, when armed conflict resumed between the Myanmar military and the Kachin Independence Army. She speaks with an OCHA staff member about the need for children's education and livelihood opportunities for families in the camp. OCHA/Kyaw Naing Win

- the IASC, to coordinate and develop a system-wide understanding and holistic approach that ensures the most vulnerable and marginalized are not excluded from humanitarian response. This effort will be facilitated by a diverse, equitable, anti-racist and inclusive leadership team and partners. Actions will include reviewing, simplifying and reducing overlaps in guidance; showing linkages with policies on gender equality, protection, Accountability to Affected People, cash and localization; articulating the roles and responsibilities of actors in the sector; training and retraining staff and repurposing functions where necessary; and strengthening regional offices and deep field presence. All geographic regions will be included to ensure a holistic approach.
4. Strengthen the integration of vulnerable and marginalized groups into humanitarian response. OCHA will work with partners to review current practices to simplify guidance and ensure a common understanding of what is required to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups and empower them to participate in all stages of the HPC. The exercise will increase analytical and reporting capacity to understand drivers of exclusion and harm, the vulnerabilities and capacities of diverse groups, and how a crisis may affect them differently. Coordination tools will be reviewed and adapted to integrate the voices and priorities of all parts of the affected population, and related training will be provided to OCHA staff. System-wide strategic objectives at the country level will consider the needs of even the most marginalized or difficult to reach. Efforts to monitor, evaluate and improve accountability for an impartial response will be increased to ensure that the inclusion and participation of marginalized populations is not an afterthought or an optional extra but an integral driver of every humanitarian response.
  5. Promote an intersectional approach. OCHA will work with partners to ensure robust analysis on gender and other groups at risk, and to better understand structural inequalities across geographic locations, including the multiple forms of discrimination that people face because of their sex, gender or SOGIESC. An intersectional approach that examines gender together with other factors, such as age, disability, ethnicity, religion, marital status and displacement, will inform strategies for a holistic approach, including prioritized protection outcomes, that leaves no one behind.
  6. Lead by example. OCHA will continue efforts to ensure its leadership, staff and processes reflect the geographic, ethnic, racial, gender, socioeconomic and other diversity of the population it serves, and uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination, as well as a strict “do no harm” approach. OCHA will train staff to understand and implement a “leave no one behind” approach. In the processes it leads, OCHA will ensure opportunities for marginalized groups to have their voices heard and to take part in decision-making, including in the coordination of humanitarian response. OCHA will protect against SEAH in line with the IASC Vision and Strategy on PSEAH 2022-2026.



## 5

## CATALYTIC HUMANITARIAN FINANCING THAT DELIVERS IMPACT IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

Donor funding has grown, but the gap between needs and resources will widen over the next decade. Current trends show an ever-increasing gap between humanitarian needs and the financial capacities to respond. There is an urgent need to increase the quantity and quality of financing for humanitarian action to ensure that limited resources have the most impact on people's lives.

Reasons for the widening gap include growing needs driven by the six trends described above, as well as inadequate development responses in many crisis contexts. The

gap has also grown due to reliance on a handful of core donors, as the humanitarian sector struggles to mobilize significant and consistent additional funding. In addition, the humanitarian community has struggled to articulate the cost of not providing funding clearly and quantifiably to convince donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) that increasing funding now will prevent the need to pay more later.

However, even new funding is unlikely to close the gap. Therefore, it is critical to improve the quality of humanitarian financing and direct

Winter in north-west Syria is characterized by flooding, unpredictable storms and extreme cold. The Al-Karameh camps are home to almost 13,500 households and located in the north-west, near the border with Türkiye. OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman

it where it has the most impact. Financing is not as effective or efficient as it could be for several reasons. First, financing is often spread across plans and programmes, often outside those developed by HCTs. Funds often bypass actors or areas that could provide more impact and value, such as local actors and anticipatory action. Second, while the humanitarian sector reports on supplies, activities or services provided, it has been weaker at demonstrating impacts on people's lives or on the drivers of harm and needs they face. Without disaggregation of funding data and consistent impact reporting, the humanitarian sector lacks a vital tool to make the case for increased financing while improving accountability. Third, insufficient

development and climate financing in countries and communities most at risk of crises places pressure on humanitarian actors and budgets. Finances are insufficient to achieve sustainable solutions for affected communities. Fourth, HDP and climate financing are rarely coordinated or aligned with one another or with national sources of finance. It is hard to ensure these efforts are complementary and able to address populations' short- and long-term needs. Fifth, financing is primarily reactive and mobilized to address observed needs. For predictable shocks, financing must be released earlier to mitigate the foreseeable humanitarian impact, minimize the cost of the response and reduce human suffering.



**Objective: Humanitarian financing that is more catalytic and innovative in directly impacting people's lives.**

To achieve this objective, OCHA, across its five core functions, will deliver the following during 2023-2026:

1. Promote increased financing, particularly unearmarked and predictable financing, for humanitarian action to meet the exponential rise in humanitarian needs. OCHA will leverage its leadership role in coordination and advocacy for funding for global humanitarian action, particularly through OCHA-managed Pooled Funds, as well as from new sources such as the private sector and climate finance, and through innovative financing mechanisms. OCHA will further use its leadership role to advocate for financing to prevent, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, including through anticipatory approaches by the humanitarian community, Governments, the private sector, climate actors and IFIs. OCHA will further increase analytical capacity, including through disaggregated

funding reporting, and advocacy to demonstrate the cost of inaction.

2. Promote equitable financing for chronically underfunded sectors and priorities, particularly for responding to, mitigating and preventing drivers of harm and need. These priorities should include gender-based violence, women and girls, children and youth, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced persons and migrants, persons with diverse SOGIESC, indigenous peoples, and urban poor and rural communities. OCHA's Pooled Funds will work to make humanitarian financing more accessible to local organizations, including women's organizations and networks.
3. Contribute to a coherent financing landscape in fragile and crisis-affected countries. OCHA will invest in financing analysis at global, regional and country levels to better understand the financing landscape. At the country level, OCHA will seek to understand

and leverage national and local financing. OCHA will use this analysis to influence the use of different funding streams and strengthen coherence across the HDP and climate sectors, in support of country-level financing strategies aimed at impacting the most vulnerable communities. OCHA will further ensure alignment and complementarity among its Pooled Funds and engage with other funding tools across the HDP nexus, including the Peacebuilding Fund and the Sustainable Development Fund.

4. Champion increased investment for climate adaptation, anticipatory action, provision of basic services and other priorities in contexts vulnerable to humanitarian crises. OCHA will influence donors, Governments, IFIs, regional banks and the private sector to direct more financing to people most vulnerable to and at risk of crises. OCHA

will provide analysis and convene stakeholders to create a shared understanding of the drivers of the crisis and the risks and impact of not investing. OCHA will further identify the geographic areas and interventions where financing will have the greatest impact on community resilience and reducing needs, including community-level climate adaptation, disaster risk financing, anticipatory action and access to basic services. OCHA will broker advice to non-humanitarian institutions on financing these areas within their institutional constraints.

5. Scale OCHA-managed Pooled Funds as financing catalysts that deliver impact for people. While continuing to prioritize humanitarian assistance that most benefits affected people, OCHA will view its Pooled Funds as financing catalysts that go beyond cash flow mechanisms to fund

This man has managed the Al-Teh camp in the Batenta community in Idleb, Syria, for more than three years.  
OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman



concrete outcomes. The Pooled Funds will invest in strategic areas that the humanitarian community must scale up, including assistance that is anticipatory, inclusive and locally led. The funds will also promote effective and quality programming that is accountable to affected people, responds to their needs and priorities, and delivers collective solutions to reach those in greatest need. OCHA-managed Pooled Funds will set an example for the humanitarian sector by articulating their impact on people's lives and strengthening their agility to respond to unforeseen needs. They will promote learning and innovation and will catalyse change throughout the humanitarian sector. OCHA's country-led pilots (see chapter C.I) will use the Pooled

Funds to adapt and respond to affected people's needs and priorities.

6. Support and facilitate a systemic shift to coherent and embedded anticipatory approaches, including anticipatory action. OCHA will use its own financing tools to facilitate, generate evidence for and scale up collective anticipatory action. As a leading advocate for global crisis risk financing, OCHA will aim to prevent, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises through anticipatory action and other forward-looking and risk-informed approaches by humanitarian actors, Governments, climate actors and IFIs. OCHA will also consider the private sector's increasingly large role in anticipatory action, including through blended financing models.

## 6

### STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF RISKS AND TRENDS TO ADAPT TO AN EVOLVING LANDSCAPE

As risks become increasingly intense and unpredictable, the ERC's ability to lead efforts to deliver solutions for crisis-affected people will depend on OCHA's ability to look ahead, understand the wider landscape, think tactically and facilitate solutions.

The importance of strategic foresight and the need to understand risks, prepare for uncertainty and be agile has increased, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. A wide body of analysis from experts, think tanks and academia now considers global risks and trends. However, there is a paucity of analysis of what these trends mean at the global, regional or country levels for humanitarian action and what operational or systemic measures can adapt to them. This failure is due to several reasons. First, the urgent nature of crises leads humanitarian actors to focus on the short term, with little time to analyse

the broader geopolitical, health or socioeconomic landscape and its implications for operations or the wider humanitarian system. Second, where organizations do invest in this analysis, they often focus on a particular sector or group at risk instead of a holistic understanding of trends, threats and risks, how they interact and their implications for humanitarian action. Third, strategic foresight and specialist expertise within OCHA are often siloed and disconnected from leadership and therefore fail to bring about the timely action required to be agile and pre-emptive.

OCHA's non-sectoral mandate and placement within the UN Secretariat enable it to look at the wider landscape, and to analyse and understand geopolitical, climate and socioeconomic trends, factors and multilateral processes, as well as their implications for humanitarian assistance and protection. OCHA's leadership





role enables it to convene diverse stakeholders to create a shared understanding of the problems, carry out complementary and reinforcing advocacy, or agree to adaptations.

However, as humanitarian crises and the day-to-day demands on coordination have increased, OCHA's ability to dedicate capacity to strategic foresight analysis on current crises, emerging threats, risks and trends, and broader multilateral processes has been inconsistent. And its ability to develop policy based on broader analysis, lessons learned and evaluations has decreased in recent years. These limitations can lead to slow, inefficient

and inconsistent responses and adaptation within the organization, while hampering the ability of the ERC, HCs, OCHA and the wider humanitarian community to advocate for the most vulnerable. The humanitarian sector, including OCHA, will always need to focus resources and attention on the immediate response to crises. However, the response can be improved, and the humanitarian system can be made more resilient, agile and effective if there is also a culture of strategic foresight, knowledge management and long-term thinking at the country and global levels, with leadership to drive forward adaptations.

This woman and her eight family members live in a 3x3 m<sup>2</sup> tent in the Genete Mariam IDP site, in Ethiopia's north-eastern Benishangul Gumuz Region. They have been displaced for four years after fleeing their home due to conflict.

OCHA/Liz Loh-Taylor



The Alghazala camp, located in southern Idleb, Syria, is home to 243 displaced families. OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman



**Objective: Strengthened and consolidated strategic foresight and analysis of drivers of needs (see chapter A), risks and trends to inform decision-making by humanitarian leaders, and system-wide adaptation of effective and efficient humanitarian action.**

To achieve this objective, OCHA, across its five core functions, will deliver the following during 2023-2026:

1. Strengthen and consolidate capacity to identify, analyse, understand and catalyse action on threats, risks, trends and multilateral processes, and opportunities at all levels, as well as their implications for humanitarian action. OCHA will use analysis to create a shared understanding within the humanitarian community and with other stakeholders, and then facilitate action based on this shared understanding.

This effort will include supporting operations to be pre-emptive and agile; finding solutions to challenges that emerge from these threats, risks and trends; influencing actors that play a key role in the trajectory of longer-term risks, with a view to reducing needs in the future; helping the humanitarian community to adapt and build resilience in the face of known risks; contributing analysis on the impact of risks and trends on humanitarian action to inform the Secretary-General's Common Agenda, other system-wide processes and strategic foresight initiatives; and supporting the

humanitarian community to understand the implications of broader multilateral processes for humanitarian action and how to engage and influence them.

2. Dedicate capacity at the field and regional levels to provide the HC and ERC with a holistic analysis of crises that considers geopolitical and socioeconomic trends and factors, as well as their implications for vulnerabilities, needs and response. OCHA will also strengthen its ability to capture lessons learned and knowledge directly from local and operational partners, including through regional offices and deep field presence, to inform policy and longer-term solutions.
3. Further convene, influence and engage partnerships with stakeholders to adapt and induce change. OCHA will partner with think tanks, academia, UN agencies, broader UN system actors, IFIs and other stakeholders to obtain insights and ensure a robust and data-driven analysis of current and emerging trends and risks. OCHA will disseminate analysis and convene Member States, UN agencies, IFIs, NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders to inform, influence and catalyse action on global risks and trends that affect humanitarian action. It will provide normative leadership to identify gaps in international humanitarian policy and legal frameworks, and to advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable, including through policy support to Member States.
4. Be an advocate and force multiplier. OCHA will use its analysis for public and private advocacy to increase understanding of the threats, patterns of harm, risks and trends facing people in crisis globally or in specific contexts, and the solutions required to address these challenges. OCHA will sharpen its communications and advocacy to ensure its products are developed and designed to have the most impact with targeted audiences.
5. Strengthen analysis, decision-making and coherence within the policy cycle. OCHA will bring together policy, analysis and expertise across the organization to ensure the ERC and senior management, including the IASC, regularly receive holistic, coherent analysis and advice on current and emerging threats, risks, challenges and opportunities. OCHA will implement a corporate process for risk-based decision-making across the organization to ensure regular review of the risk landscape, adjustments to strategy and operations based thereon, and interaction of leadership with risk analysis. It will continue to work to improve data quality and interoperability and to address other foundational challenges that obstruct quality analysis.

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CHAPTER

04

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ENABLERS

Achieving the above transformational priorities and realizing the potential of OCHA's identity will only be possible with the right leadership, partnerships, workforce and working methods. Five fundamental enablers underpin the implementation of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan: (I) leadership and accountability; (II) diversity, equity and inclusion; (III) learning, evaluation and results; (IV) analysis and data-driven decision-making; and (V) partnerships.

These enablers should be viewed in tandem with the OCHA People Strategy 2022-2026,<sup>47</sup>

which aims to support all OCHA personnel. The People Strategy outlines the workforce and organizational culture necessary to equip OCHA's greatest asset – its people – to deliver on transformations in an environment that supports learning, well-being and safety. The enablers will depend on each of OCHA's five core functions – Coordination, Advocacy and Communications, Humanitarian Financing, Policy and Information Management (see chapter B.II.) – which must be called upon in a cross-functional manner to promote synergies and avoid silos.

## LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

OCHA's leadership will bring the organization together to deliver on the transformational priorities and strongly communicate a vision for change. This process requires fostering a culture of respect and addressing power imbalances, institutional discrimination and entrenched biases to achieve better Accountability to Affected People. It means clearly articulating the role of OCHA staff in integrating gender dynamics, PSEAH, the centrality of protection, durable solutions and other priorities into their work. It requires empowering managers, training and retraining staff, and ensuring reciprocal accountability for delivering on the work of the organization. And it entails motivating staff, embracing the best of their skills and abilities, and fostering an environment for them to thrive.

As important as delivering results is managers' accountability for staff well-being and a culture consistent with the values of OCHA and the UN. OCHA is committed to creating a safe space, fostering a speak-up culture and upholding codes of conduct. Leadership will have open, honest and regular communication with staff across all levels, building

trust and enhancing the work of the organization, in teams and for individuals. Managers will promote a respectful, diverse, equitable and inclusive organization. They will ensure adequate duty of care, including the safety, health and well-being of staff and their families, particularly during times of crises and for colleagues in the deep field.

Effective and accountable leadership will be promoted through the following actions:

- OCHA will invest in leadership growth and development. There will be clear performance standards for managers and leaders and leadership development opportunities. Leadership mentoring and on-the-job training will provide opportunities for all staff, including national staff, to advance within the organization.
- OCHA will consistently champion inclusion, protection, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the humanitarian principles. The ERC and the rest of OCHA leadership will consistently champion inclusive humanitarian action for diverse needs, identifying gaps

47. The OCHA People Strategy 2022-2026 focuses on three objectives: (1) OCHA is a respectful, diverse and inclusive organization; (2) OCHA leads with a "People First" approach; and (3) OCHA fosters a healthy, safe and secure environment.



Following an arduous journey out of occupied territory in Ukraine, these three women enjoy a moment of relief on a bus from Zaporizhzhia to Poland.  
OCHA/Matteo Minasi

and emphasizing the responsibility of States and all humanitarian organizations, leaders and staff.

- OCHA will foster a culture of accountability for results. OCHA will take steps towards rolling out and implementing results-based management for all operations to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the transformations. This effort will entail not only new tools and processes but also promoting and enforcing a change culture by ensuring results-oriented performance management at every stage, from planning to monitoring and reporting. OCHA will establish clear performance standards and strengthen measurement systems for performance assessments. Resource allocation will be based on organizational priorities and annual plans. Regular perfor-

mance monitoring and evaluation will be strengthened, and accountability for results will be promoted at all levels. OCHA will also ensure alignment of its systems and processes with the Secretariat’s system-wide Results-Based Management Systems, which include Strategic Management Systems and Integrated Planning Management and Reporting systems.

- OCHA will implement a robust Organizational Resilience Management system to adapt to escalating risks, in line with GA resolution 67/254 A(\*) and in close coordination with host Governments. These efforts will enable OCHA to learn from experience, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to anticipate, plan for and adapt to compounding risks.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

OCHA commits to prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism in its workforce, as well as in its coordination services and programmes. OCHA will enhance women's leadership in the humanitarian sector and implement measures to achieve gender parity. It will work to eliminate systemic racism, discrimination and related intolerance to ensure that everyone's voices are heard and their concerns acted upon. OCHA will help create an environment where communities are protected from SEAH, and where aid workers feel supported, respected and empowered to deliver assistance free from discrimination, as well as empowered and supported to report on and take action against SEAH in any form, and at any and all levels. Such work will align with and draw from the Secretariat's existing efforts.<sup>48</sup> Consistent adherence to the UN Rules and Regulations and accountable management will facilitate the fair and equitable treatment of staff as they deliver results to the communities that OCHA serves.

All those working to deliver on the transformational priorities will be supported through the following actions:

- OCHA will continue efforts to ensure its leadership, staff and processes reflect the diversity of the population it serves, while also upholding the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and the imperative to "do no harm." In the processes it leads, OCHA will ensure opportunities for marginalized groups to have their voices heard and to take part in decision-making, including in the coordination of humanitarian response.
- OCHA will empower its staff to make responsible decisions to deliver on the six transformational priorities. It will identify and work to attract, recruit and retain talented personnel from diverse populations, with consideration for underrepresented groups. OCHA will identify and develop national staff talent and skills, with equal opportunities for training, professional growth and long-term career progression.

## LEARNING, EVALUATION, INNOVATION AND RESULTS

As humanitarian actors respond to new challenges and escalating risks, OCHA will foster an organizational culture of learning and skills development, innovation and delivering results aligned with the transformational priorities. This culture will include a cycle of knowledge management (lessons learned, evaluation, evolving policy and guidance, and learning/skills development) for nimble and constant innovation, accountability and resilience to emerging risks. Progress on results-based management will allow leadership to monitor, measure and account for resources, while improved alignment of the Plan and budgetary

processes will properly resource priorities. Alongside enhanced learning, OCHA will bring on staff with specialized skills and knowledge.

The following actions will shape a culture that can enable the transformational priorities:

- In alignment with the transformational priorities, OCHA will lead the development of guidance and training internally and for the wider humanitarian community.
- Transformations during the Plan period will require enhanced investment in training and staff capacities. OCHA will facilitate

48. Such efforts include the Geographical Diversity Strategy; Bulletin on the Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, and Abuse of Authority; UN Values and Behaviours Framework; Strategic Action Plan on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations Secretariat; UN Secretariat System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity; UN Disability Inclusion Strategy; and UN-wide Strategy on Youth.



coaching and training to strengthen staff competence and skills base, including through retraining staff and repurposing functions where necessary. It will bring on board staff with the skills and knowledge to deliver on the transformational priorities and other relevant areas, including climate change, cash, Accountability to Affected People, anticipatory action, localization, protection, monitoring and evaluation, and the intersectionality between these areas.

- OCHA will make continuous innovation a core feature of its work in the delivery of the transformational priorities. All staff will be empowered to explore new ideas, strategies, products and processes to solve administrative and operational challenges. Innovations that lead to organizational efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the transformational priorities will receive particular attention.

### ANALYSIS AND DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

OCHA will continue to invest in data and analysis across its five core functions to enable the delivery of the transformational priorities. It will have a clear, unified, cross-branch strategy for its approach to data and analytics that will use technology and skilled personnel to create a data-driven and analytical culture across the organization. OCHA will invest in capacity and working methods to provide just-in-time insight about the impact of humanitarian crises, balancing uncertainty with the lead time necessary to respond to people at risk and in need. And it will support a faster and more continuous cycle between analysis, decision-making and organizational coherence.

This widow lives in Kasongo, in DRC's Maniema Province. She looks after a household of 15 people who she has to feed alone. But finding enough to eat is a daily struggle.  
OCHA/Alioune N'Diaye



OCHA will produce more robust, data-driven analysis for better evidence-based decision-making by investing in capacity across all functions and locations. Specifically, greater focus will be made on data and analysis that drive decision-making, planning, response design and clearer prioritization. OCHA will use data and analysis to strengthen the capacity and work of the ERC and humanitarian partners for private and public advocacy, access negotiations, UN Security Council engagement and media outreach.

Analysis and data-driven decision-making that enable the transformational priorities will be encouraged through the following actions:

- OCHA will invest in data-collection and processing systems to strengthen its evidence base, supported by frequent updates and training. It will enhance expertise in situational analysis, foresight and

predictive analytics to inform strategic decision-making at the global and operational levels as well as whole-of-organization response. OCHA will advocate for inclusive data collection and analysis, including a commitment to sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data collection and analysis, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the diverse capabilities and needs of the people it serves.

- OCHA will work with partners to ensure robust protection and analysis of gender and other groups at risk, to better understand structural inequality and the multiple forms of discrimination and drivers of harm that groups at risk may face, including especially women, girls and gender-diverse people. An intersectional approach that examines gender together with other factors, such as age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, marital status and displacement, will help identify and prioritize drivers of needs and

An OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer talks with people affected by the flooding of the Oubangui River in DRC's South Ubangi Province. OCHA/Alioune N'Diaye



threats to basic safety and enjoyment of rights, and inform a holistic approach that leaves no one behind.

- OCHA will invest in improved financial tracking and analysis at the global, regional and country levels. This analysis will influence the use of funding to improve impact for the most at-risk communities. It will also strengthen coherence across the HDP nexus and climate landscape.
- OCHA will partner with think tanks, academia, UN agencies, IFIs and other stakeholders to enable better analysis and an evidence-driven understanding of risks and trends. It will disseminate analysis and convene stakeholders to inform, influence and catalyse action on global risks and trends that impact humanitarian action. And it will provide normative leadership to identify gaps in policy and legal frameworks affecting the data subject rights of the most vulnerable, including through policy support to Member States.
- OCHA will continue to deliver its core situational analysis products to inform situational awareness for every crisis. It will review these products for potential improvements, including better and more dynamic analysis and more up-to-date data.
- OCHA will promote and facilitate foresight and future-thinking approaches that can generate evidence for and scale up more collective anticipatory action, as well as other forward-looking and risk-informed approaches ahead of predictable crises.
- OCHA will seek to influence system-wide awareness and risk assessments, while promoting investments and partnerships in emerging areas of data and technology, such as artificial intelligence and automated decision-making, cybersecurity and digital solutions to assist and engage affected people.
- Putting people's rights and freedoms at the core of its digital and data transformation, OCHA will coordinate and facilitate system-wide standards for data responsibility to ensure the safe, ethical and effective management of data in humanitarian response.
- OCHA will develop and promote common services and standards to increase the use of data and analysis in humanitarian response. This includes continued development and maintenance of open platforms, shared infrastructure, network solutions and digital public goods.

## PARTNERSHIPS

OCHA will invest in diverse, equitable and inclusive partnerships to strengthen analysis, create a shared understanding of risks and challenges, and convene partners to achieve better outcomes for people at risk. OCHA will work more locally and with more accountability, and it will put communities at the centre of designing, planning and structuring longer-term and locally tailored solutions.

Partnerships will be promoted through the following actions:

- OCHA will work with partners, donors and other stakeholders to develop a coordination architecture that empowers HCs and HCTs to tailor coordination models to specific contexts, enabling a more agile response while ensuring predictability and quality.
- OCHA will invest in a wide network of partnerships to support its work on access, resource mobilization and advocacy at all levels. Specifically, OCHA will reinvigorate strategic partnerships with Member States and regional entities that can support access efforts, particularly in conflict environments.

OCHA will also engage with non-traditional partners, such as the private sector, think tanks and academic institutions, to diversify its existing network and foster catalytic investments for delivering solutions. OCHA will also facilitate joint analysis, coordination, complementarity and coherence with other parts of the UN system while safeguarding humanitarian space.

- OCHA will direct efforts towards key local stakeholders to better understand local contexts, conflict dynamics and actors of influence. OCHA will collaborate with local partners and draw on their knowledge to inform programming, policy, advocacy and longer-term solutions. To work more locally and with more accountability, OCHA will strengthen regional offices and deep field presence, as well as its collaboration, coherence and synergies with local and

national Governments and actors, NGOs and civil-society organizations, including women-led organizations.

- OCHA will work with partners, including the IASC, to develop a system-wide understanding and holistic approach to an impartial humanitarian response that ensures the most vulnerable and marginalized are not excluded. OCHA will work with partners to review and reform practices, or to build new ones, to ensure vulnerable and marginalized groups are identified, included and enabled to participate in all stages of a response.
- OCHA will convene, influence and partner with relevant stakeholders to adapt and induce change while creating a common understanding of risks, trends, multilateral processes, and lessons learned at the country and global levels.

This woman lives in a tent with her seven children in the Al-Teh camp in Idlib, Syria.  
OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman



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CHAPTER

05

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CONCLUSION



In 2023, 339 million people in 69 countries will need humanitarian relief. That is 65 million more people than in 2022 – a 25 per cent increase. It is the highest number of people requiring humanitarian assistance ever recorded. The 38 response plans in the Global Humanitarian Overview 2023 aim to help 230 million of those people most at risk. The cost of the response is \$51.5 billion, another all-time record.

To narrow the gap between the surging numbers of people in need and the funds required to help them, the root causes of need must be addressed: the climate crisis, slow and uneven economic growth, widening inequality, increasing instability, fragility and conflict, pandemics and disease outbreaks, and a fragmented, competitive geopolitical landscape.

Addressing these drivers of need in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex landscape

requires a paradigm shift through six transformational priorities: a coherent response that is people centred, context specific and contributes to community resilience; systematic and predictable leadership on humanitarian access; durable solutions for IDPs; a consistently inclusive response that leaves no one behind; catalytic humanitarian financing that delivers impact in people's lives; and coherent and strategic analysis of risks and trends to adapt to an evolving landscape.

Achieving the transformational priorities requires the implementation of five fundamental enablers across OCHA's five core functions: leadership and accountability; diversity, equity and inclusion; learning, evaluation and results; analysis and data-driven decision-making; and partnerships. These partnerships include the humanitarian, donor and IASC community, but they also go far beyond to the development, climate, peace and private sectors.

An OCHA Public Information Officer walks through a displacement site outside of Beira, Mozambique, where families affected by Cyclone Idai relocated.  
OCHA/Charlotte Cans

Each of OCHA's five core functions will be instrumental in delivering on the Plan and its transformational priorities. Coordination, Advocacy and Communications, Humanitarian Financing, Policy and Information Management each play a vital part in contributing services and outputs towards a successful roll-out of the transformational priorities. This offers the opportunity for better cross-functional collaboration and breaking up organizational silos.

The Plan addresses the most critical areas where transformation is needed, adaptation is possible and OCHA has a key leadership role. It neither suggests a restructuring of OCHA nor covers all activities in OCHA's Strategic Results Framework or annual workplans. It is a strategic document that outlines the direction of travel towards necessary collective and institutional transformations for OCHA

and the humanitarian system. The Plan will be translated into operational practice and concrete goals and outcomes through six implementation plans – one for each transformational priority. These goals and outcomes will be owned and supported by activities across functions.

A bleak future is not inevitable. "We are at an inflection point in history," the UN Secretary-General noted. "Humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: a breakdown or a breakthrough." Choices, commitments and actions by leaders today can reduce need and vulnerability tomorrow. The Plan is a point of departure rather than arrival. Even as they advocate for global solidarity for people in crisis today, humanitarian actors, their donors and partners must prepare for the growing risks and challenges of 2023-2026 and beyond.



**OCHA**

United Nations  
Office for the Coordination  
of Humanitarian Affairs