

Global Humanitarian Platform and Principles of Partnership:

ActionAid position

February 2007

ActionAid was one of 40 organisations which met to convene the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) in Geneva in July 2006. The GHP brings together members of the three main strands of humanitarian action, the NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the UN and related international organisations.

The goal of the GHP is to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action, based on the perspective that collaboration between actors is vital in order to effectively address humanitarian needs. The GHP brings together NGOs Red Cross/Red Crescent and UN agencies on an equal footing, recognising diversity as an asset, interdependence among humanitarian organisations, and acknowledging an ethical obligation and accountability to the populations we work with.

Activities of the GHP:

In July 2007 the GHP endorsed the 5 Principles of Partnership and members are committed to implementing the Principles within their own organisations and in their relationships with others. Members engage in a dialogue on strategic issues of common concern, including accountability to populations we work with, strengthening the capacity of local actors, safety and security of staff and our roles in situations of transition.

In December 2007 the *GHP Action Plan 2007-2009* was posted, based on the Summary Record of the July 2007 GHP meeting and comments from the Working Group tasked with implementation of activities to be undertaken by interested stakeholders of the GHP. The Plan includes such issues as dissemination of the Principles of Partnership (PoP), development of a communications strategy to promote the dissemination of the PoP, support for the formation of Humanitarian Partnership Country Team (HPCTs) and sharing of best practices and monitoring and evaluation of and reporting on progress.

ActionAid's position:

ActionAid supports the purpose and goal of the GHP and strives to work in conjunction with our partners in accordance with the Principles of Partnership. We take a rights based approach and analysis which puts poor and excluded people at the centre of responses.

We work closely with local civil society organisations, for example using the Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) tool to help communities undertake an in-depth analysis of its vulnerability to hazards and identify what can be done by different groups/stakeholders to reduce risks, which was applauded for its participatory focus by the UK's International Development Committee in its 7th

Report 2005-2006 on Humanitarian Response to Natural Disasters. We are committed to capacity building of our national and local partners and ActionAid values commit us to work to ensure equity and justice for all. We are committed to accountability to the populations we work with and our participatory review and reflection sessions provide an opportunity for partners to feed back their experiences of our work. ActionAid also undertakes Social Audits and Community Reviews, for example using village transparency boards to share information and invite comment. We undertake open processes for partner community audits, which enable community members to audit project expenses incurred at village level.

ActionAid encourages the participation of its national ngo partners in UN led humanitarian coordination mechanisms, especially in the Humanitarian Partnership Country Teams or similar forums where they exist, and in the case of sudden on-set or on-going complex emergencies, in the clusters most relevant to their work.

Principles of Partnership

A Statement of Commitment

Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007

The *Global Humanitarian Platform*, created in July 2006, brings together UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations on an equal footing.

- Striving to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action, based on an ethical obligation and accountability to the populations we serve,
- Acknowledging diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community and recognizing the interdependence among humanitarian organizations,
- Committed to building and nurturing an effective partnership,

... the organizations participating in the **Global Humanitarian Platform** agree to base their partnership on the following principles:

- **Equality**

Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations and independence and recognize each other's constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.

- **Transparency**

Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.

- **Result-oriented approach**

Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires result-oriented coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.

- **Responsibility**

Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills, and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort.

- **Complementarity**

The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.