The NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project II

A chance to influence the humanitarian system

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Glossary of the NHRP II

The terms and definitions in this glossary have been put together based on existing glossaries and other reference material available to the public. The definitions represent common usage and understanding within a humanitarian context, particularly natural disasters and complex emergencies. Some definitions use simpler more direct language than the official version in order to make the glossary easier to use. The terms have been agreed in consultation with NGO and UN colleagues participating in the work of the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project, Phase II (NHRP II). OCHA and UNHCR were consulted in the development of the glossary. The definitions do not necessarily reflect legal definitions or the official position of the members of the NHRP II consortium, the United Nations, or its Member States. The English Glossary of Humanitarian Terms is an initiative of the NGO and Humanitarian Reform Project. In assembling this glossary, the NHRP consulted with a number of humanitarian partners who support the initiative, including NGOs, the Sphere Project, UNHCR and OCHA.

Accountability: In a humanitarian context, accountability means that the power of an organization is exercised responsibly when providing assistance to disaster-affected communities. It is a process of taking into account the views of and being held responsible by, different stakeholders, and primarily the people affected by the crisis.

Advocacy: In the context of humanitarian aid, advocacy refers to efforts to promote respect for humanitarian principles, law, and needs, with a view to influencing the relevant political authorities, international organisations, other stakeholders or international public opinion.

Assessment: Assessment entails the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information about a population of concern (their needs, capacities, resources, etc.), as well as the state of infrastructure and general socio-economic conditions in a given location/area.

Assistance: "Humanitarian assistance" refers to assistance provided by organisations for humanitarian purposes (i.e., non-political, non-commercial, and non-military purposes) during an emergency, to address the physical, material and legal needs of persons of concern. This includes provision of supplies, such as food items, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, latrines, seeds and tools, and infrastructure (schools, roads), as well as the provision of services, such as health, education, nutrition, psycho-social support and protection.

Baseline: A baseline is a starting point for monitoring that provides a thorough assessment of conditions in an area of interest against which later changes can be measured and compared.

Bilateral Aid/Assistance: Aid that is controlled and spent by donor countries at their own discretion. It may include staff, supplies, equipment, or funding to recipient governments and NGOs. It also includes assistance channeled as earmarked funding through international and UN organisations.

Capacity: A combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organisation. Capacity can reduce the level of risk faced by the group, or the effects of a disaster on that group. It may include physical means, institutional abilities, societal infrastructure, as well as human skills such as leadership and management.

Capacity Building: A process by which individuals, institutions and societies increase their strengths, skills and resources. In the humanitarian system, this term often suggests the support of an external partner, such as an NGO or UN agency.

Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF): The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is funded by voluntary contributions from governments around the world. It is intended to complement existing humanitarian funding systems. The CERF provides funds for critical operations and life-saving programmes not yet funded through other sources. CERF funds are granted only to UN agencies and IOM, but the UN agency receiving CERF funds may sub-grant funds to NGO partners.

The grant facility of CERF has two components:
   i) Rapid response grants to promote early action and response to reduce loss of life and to enhance response to time-critical requirements; and
   ii) Underfunded emergency grants to strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises.

Civil Military Coordination (CMCoord): The dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid duplication, minimise inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals.

Civil Society: Civil society is independent from governments, and includes non-governmental organisations and human rights groups, community leaders, religious congregations, charities, and universities. Domestic civil society is an important source of humanitarian assistance and civilian protection during humanitarian emergencies.

Climate Change: A change in the climate that persists for decades as a result of human activity. It is observed in changes to the natural environment and can be the cause of natural disasters such as flooding, cyclones or drought. Climate change affects the surrounding ecosystem, e.g. through increased temperatures and changing weather patterns.

Cluster: A cluster is a group of humanitarian organisations (UN and NGO) working in a sector of humanitarian action (e.g. health). Clusters create partnerships between international humanitarian actors, national and local authorities, and civil society, in order to respond in a coordinated way to humanitarian needs.

Cluster Activation: Clusters are created (activated) when clear humanitarian needs exist within a sector, when there are numerous actors within sectors, and when national authorities need coordination support to provide assistance. Clusters provide a clear point of contact and are accountable for adequate and appropriate humanitarian assistance. Each cluster has a Cluster Lead Agency or Agencies (CLA) which ensures predictability of response.

Cluster Approach: The Cluster Approach aims to strengthen humanitarian response capacity and effectiveness in five key ways:
   i) ensuring sufficient global capacity is built up and maintained in key sectors/areas of response;
   ii) identifying predictable leadership in the sectors/areas of response;
   iii) facilitating partnerships and improving inter-agency efforts to mutually reinforce resources;
   iv) strengthening accountability; and
   v) improving strategic field-level coordination and prioritization in specific sectors/areas of response, by placing responsibility for humanitarian response with a designated Cluster Lead Agency or Agencies (CLA).

Cluster Leads: A cluster lead (CLA) is an agency or organization that formally commits to take on a leadership role within the international humanitarian community in a particular sector or area of activity, to ensure adequate response and high standards of predictability, accountability & partnership. Some clusters have one cluster lead, others have two (one UN and one NGO). The cluster lead may differ between a natural disaster response and a complex emergency response.

Cluster Roll-out: Following the activation of the cluster system, clusters need to be rolled-out, both at national and sub-national level. The 'roll-out' means setting up the cluster coordination structures, in line with Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for cluster activation. Roll-out includes producing a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the cluster, and implementing a strategic plan for the cluster's work in coordinating humanitarian response.

Code of Conduct: A common set of principles or standards that an agency or group of agencies have agreed to follow while providing humanitarian assistance.

Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP): The CHAP is a strategic plan for humanitarian response in a given country or region and includes the following elements:
- a common analysis of the context in which humanitarian action takes place;
- an assessment of needs;
- best, worst, and most likely scenarios;
- stakeholder analysis, i.e. who does what and where;
- a clear statement of longer-term objectives and goals;
- prioritised response plans; and
- a framework for monitoring the strategy and revising it if necessary.

Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF): The CHF is a fund that several donors contribute to. It is used to support rapid distribution of money to the most serious humanitarian needs under the direction of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). CHFs support United Nations (UN) agencies and non- governmental organisations (NGOs) that participate in the country's consolidated appeals process (CAP).

Community-Based Approach: A community-based approach motivates women, girls, boys and men in the community to participate in a way that allows them to express their needs, concerns and priorities to humanitarian agencies and be sure that these will be taken into account in the planning, work and evaluation of activities.

Complex Emergency: A humanitarian crisis resulting from internal or international conflict. A complex emergency requires an international response that goes beyond the ability or mandate of a single organisation. The response to a complex emergency is different to a natural disaster response because of the different risks and protection concerns in a conflict situation.

Consolidated Appeal: A consolidated appeal is a document describing the humanitarian strategy, projects and funding requirements, in response to a major or complex emergency.

Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) is a tool used by aid organisations to plan, coordinate, fund, implement, monitor and raise funds for their activities, in emergencies that require a system wide humanitarian response. It is both a planning and programming tool, and a coordination mechanism. The CAP contributes significantly to developing a coordinated and strategic approach to humanitarian action. It also fosters close cooperation between host governments, donors, and aid agencies, as they work together to produce a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) and an appeal for funds.

Consultation: In a humanitarian context, consultation is the process of formally discussing humanitarian needs, programming, or activities with stakeholders that include affected communities directly. Consultation may be between agencies and representatives of affected communities or agency to agency.

Contingency Planning: Contingency planning is a process to ensure that adequate arrangements are made in anticipation of a crisis or rapid deterioration of an existing emergency. This is achieved primarily through engagement in an agency or multi-agency planning process, leading to a plan of action, together with follow-up actions.

Convergence: Convergence, or inter-cluster convergence, refers to the overlap between cluster objectives and activities (e.g. health and nutrition, WASH and education, logistics and shelter). Convergence takes place between global clusters at an international scale, and also at the country level.

Coping Capacity: The ability of people or organisations to manage conditions that could potentially lead to an emergency. This ability involves awareness, resources and good management.

Declaration of Disaster: Official announcement of a state of emergency when a large-scale natural disaster (e.g. drought, floods, earthquake) happens, in order to activate humanitarian operations.

Disaster: A natural catastrophe that causes serious disruption to the affected community and widespread human, material, economic and/or environmental losses, which exceed the coping capacity of the affected community.

Disaster Mitigation: A set of measures to reduce the impact of natural hazards by reducing social, practical, or physical vulnerability.

Disaster Preparedness: The organisation, education, and training of communities and institutions to assist effective early warning, evacuation, rescue, relief and assistance operations in the event of a disaster or emergency.

Disaster Risk: Disaster risk covers several different types of potential losses – in lives, livelihoods and financial and other assets. Disaster risk is assessed and mapped using knowledge of the existing dangers, and vulnerability due to the patterns of population and socio-economic development.

Disaster Risk Management: Disaster risk management involves empowering communities, vulnerable groups, local organisations and local authorities in high-risk areas with resources and capacities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Disaster Risk Reduction: Action taken to decrease the threat of disasters and the negative impacts of natural hazards, by analysing and managing the causes of disasters, including through avoidance of hazards, reduced social, physical and economic vulnerability to hazards, and improved preparedness for harmful events.

Displacement: Movement of persons from their homes caused by violent conflicts, rights violations, natural disasters and other traumatic events, or threats. Persons who remain within the borders of their state of nationality/residence are known as internally displaced persons (IDPs). Persons who are forced to flee outside the borders of their state of nationality/residence due to persecution or conflict are known as refugees.

Early Warning: The supply of useful information on time, through recognised institutions, that allows communities and individuals exposed to hazards to take action to avoid or reduce their impact and prepare for effective response.

Early Warning System: An early warning system is needed to provide timely information to communities threatened by danger, so that communities and individuals can act in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of personal injury, loss of life and livelihoods, damage to property and the environment, and to prepare for effective response from a natural hazard.
A people-centred early warning system (EWS) is made up of four key elements:
      i) knowledge of the risks;
      ii) monitoring and analysis of the hazards;
      iii) communication or dissemination of alerts and warnings; and
      iv) local capabilities to respond to the warnings received.

Early Recovery: Early recovery begins in a humanitarian setting. It aims to generate self-sustaining locally owned and sustainable actions for post-crisis recovery. Early recovery includes the rebuilding of basic services, livelihoods, shelter, governance, security and the rule of law, environment and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. It addresses underlying risks that contributed to the crisis.

Emergency: There are two types of emergencies (see also Complex Emergency). A rapid onset emergency (e.g. earthquake, refugee influx) is a sudden and usually unforeseen event that calls for immediate action to minimise its negative consequences. A slow onset emergency (e.g. drought) does not emerge from a single, distinct event, but develops gradually over time, often based on different events occurring at one time.

Emergency Relief: The immediate survival assistance to communities affected by disaster, crisis or conflict. Most relief operations are initiated on short notice and have a short implementation period (project objectives are generally completed within a year). Emergency relief works together with early recovery assistance.

Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC): The Emergency Relief Coordinator is a senior UN official who oversees all emergencies requiring UN humanitarian assistance and acts as the central focal point for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities. The ERC works to ensure effective response to humanitarian crises and advocates for the protection of civilians. The ERC is a role performed by the UN Under-Secretary General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs and is supported by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to perform this role. The current USG/ERC is Valerie Amos.

Emergency Response Fund (ERF): An ERF is an OCHA-managed fund, set up with contributions from foreign government donors. ERFs are funded in-country, so each ERF is reliant on direct contributions made by institutional donors in-country. ERFs aim to provide rapid and flexible funding to in-country actors to address urgent and unforeseen humanitarian needs. NGOs can apply for funds from an ERF, as UN agencies receive emergency funding through CERF. However UN agencies are able to apply for ERF funds as needed.

Empowerment: In a humanitarian context, empowerment of beneficiaries or communities allows people to have involvement in, and greater control over, the assistance that they receive through participation in decision-making.

Evaluation: A systematic and objective assessment of the impact or significance of a project or programme that may include analysis of planning, design, implementation, results, impact and next steps.

Feedback: Feedback is a process in which information, opinions, and ideas are shared between stakeholders. Feedback is a way to understand how those benefiting from assistance feel about the effectiveness and appropriateness of the aid they are receiving. Feedback is important to humanitarian programming as it ensures that the views of stakeholders, particularly affected populations are taken into consideration when designing a programme. It also enables improvements to be made where needed. Feedback is also an opportunity for those providing assistance to answer concerns or questions that beneficiaries may have about the assistance being provided.

Financial Tracking Service (FTS): The Financial Tracking Service (FTS) is a global, real-time database which records all reported international humanitarian aid (including that for NGOs and the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, bilateral aid, in-kind aid, and private donations). FTS features a special focus on consolidated and flash appeals, because they cover the major humanitarian crises and because their funding requirements are well defined. This allows FTS to indicate whether populations in crisis are receiving humanitarian aid in proportion to needs. FTS is managed by OCHA. Donors or recipient organisations provide all FTS data.

Flash Appeal: The Flash Appeal is a tool for putting together a coordinated humanitarian response for the first three to six months of an emergency. The UN Resident and/or Humanitarian Coordinator starts a Flash Appeal in consultation with all stakeholders, after the government has declared an emergency. The Flash Appeal is issued within one week of an emergency being declared. It provides a summary of urgent life saving needs, and may include recovery projects that can be implemented within the timeframe of the Appeal.

Food Insecurity: A situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, water or land, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution, or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity may be persistent, seasonal or temporary.

Gap Analysis: In a humanitarian context, gap analysis is used to identify areas of humanitarian response and coordination that are not receiving enough attention. It can also be used as a monitoring and evaluation tool, to identify the measurable difference between an indicator and a standard.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) also Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGB): Violence that is directed against women, girls, boys and men on the basis of their gender, although it is predominantly inflicted by men against women and girls. It includes acts that inflict or threaten physical, emotional, or sexual harm and suffering.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping: A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer-based tool used for mapping a risk or hazard in humanitarian operations. GIS technology combines database operations with geographic analysis and can give higher quality results than can be obtained from geographic analysis using maps alone. The higher quality results can assist decision-making and improve coordination among agencies.

Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA): GHA is an independent project to monitor funding for humanitarian action internationally. The reports can be accessed via the project website: www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org.

Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP): The GHP is a forum to bring together the main stakeholders in the humanitarian community: nongovernmental organisations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the United Nations and related international organisations, in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action (2006 to 2010). One of its outcomes was the now widely accepted Principles of Partnership.

Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD): The GHD initiative was created by donor governments with the idea of working towards achieving efficient and principled humanitarian assistance. It provides a forum for donors to define principles and standards, and to discuss good practice in funding humanitarian assistance.

Good Practice: In a humanitarian context, good practice is an example of good work that should be shared with other humanitarian actors in order to share learning and improve humanitarian response.

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: A series of principles that articulate standards for protection, assistance and solutions for internally displaced persons, and provide guidance to States, international organisations, UN agencies, and non-governmental organisations working on internal displacement.

Hazard Mapping: Hazard mapping is used to collect and analyse information about risks and dangers in a specific area. Mapping can be of a single hazard such as fault maps and flood plain maps, or several hazard maps can be combined in a single map to give a composite picture of natural hazards.

Host Communities: Communities that take in populations of refugees or internally displaced persons outside of official camps. Host communities can suffer from food insecurity, health hazards, and other risks as a result of sharing their resources and land with IDPs or refugees, and may require assistance from humanitarian agencies.

Human Rights: Are commonly understood as fundamental legal, social, or ethical rights of freedom or entitlement to which every person is entitled simply because she or he is a human being. These rights exist for all people without distinction based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Human rights are legally guaranteed by human rights law, which is found in treaties, customary international law and other sources of law.

Human Security: The concept of human security includes economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. It takes into consideration the different vulnerabilities and resources of an individual or community, and provides analysis of community needs, to inform programming for mitigation, relief, recovery and development.

Humanitarian Access: Humanitarian access refers to the ability of an affected population to have humanitarian assistance. In order to verify access humanitarian personnel must be able to move freely and safely to have direct and reliable information about whether a population is receiving relief. In addition, humanitarian personnel need to be able deliver relief services or to reach civilians who are trapped, unable to move or detained because of armed conflict, natural disasters and other difficult situations. Humanitarian access allows impartial assessment of the needs of populations at risk and the delivery of assistance to respond to those needs. Host States have the responsibility under international humanitarian law to guarantee humanitarian access.

Humanitarian Architecture: Humanitarian architecture refers to the combined structures and systems that have been developed to coordinate international humanitarian response. The "architecture" includes mechanisms to coordinate delivery of aid (e.g. cluster system), provide funding (e.g. appeals and pooled funds like the ERFs or the CERF), and designate responsible entities and persons (e.g. HC, HCT, etc.).

Humanitarian Assistance: Aid that seeks to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis-affected population during an emergency. It will address the physical, material and legal needs of persons of concern. This includes provision of supplies, such as food items, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, latrines, seeds and tools, and infrastructure (schools, roads), as well as the provision of services, such as health, education, nutrition, psycho-social support and protection. Humanitarian assistance must be provided on the basis of the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

Humanitarian Coordination: Coordination involves sharing information and analysis, joint planning of strategies, programmes, projects and activities, as well as joint assessment, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation. All humanitarian actors share a responsibility for humanitarian coordination in order to provide a coherent humanitarian response and meet the needs and avoid duplication of efforts.

Humanitarian Coordinator (HC): In an emergency situation requiring a humanitarian response, a senior UN official is designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) to lead the humanitarian efforts in a particular country. While the primary responsibility for coordinating humanitarian assistance is held by the government, the HC is responsible for leading and coordinating the efforts of humanitarian organisations, and to ensure that they are principled, timely, effective, efficient, and contribute to longer-term recovery.

Humanitarian Country Team (HCT): The Humanitarian Country Team provides strategic direction for the overall humanitarian operation in-country. It is made up of the heads of organisations that undertake humanitarian action in country and commit to join coordination arrangement. The participating organisations include UN agencies, international organizations (such as IOM), and representatives of international and national NGOs and NGO forums, with the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement participating as observers.

Humanitarian Financing: In the context of the UN-led humanitarian reforms, humanitarian financing refers to the three pooled funds operated by OCHA: the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs), and Emergency Response Funds (ERFs).

All funding information is recorded in the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) database. OCHA operates the pooled funds, coordinates appeals, and manages the FTS.

Humanitarian Operations: Action conducted to relieve human suffering in communities affected by disaster, crisis or conflict.

Humanitarian Principles: Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with four core values of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence:

> **Humanity:** Human life must be protected and human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found and particular attention should be given to the most vulnerable in a population. The dignity of all victims but me respected.
> **Impartiality:** Humanitarian assistance must be provided only on the basis of needs, and priority must be given to the most urgent cases of distress. Humanitarian assistance must be provided without discriminating on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political opinions, race or religion.
> **Neutrality:** Humanitarian assistance must be provided without taking sides in hostilities or giving material or political support to parties to an armed conflict or other dispute.
> **Independence:** Organisations must act only under the authority of the organisation's governing body and in line with the organisation's purpose. They must provide humanitarian assistance without following government, political, military or economic policies or actions. The only purpose of humanitarian aid must be to prevent and address human suffering in a crisis.

Humanitarian Reform: The Humanitarian Reform process launched by the international humanitarian community in 2005 seeks to improve humanitarian response by promoting effective leadership and coordination, and greater predictability, accountability, and partnership within the humanitarian community. The cluster approach was developed as part of Humanitarian Reform, and the Transformative Agenda is a continuation of the reform.

There are four pillars of Humanitarian Reform:
 i) coordination and leadership;
 ii) humanitarian financing;
 iii) accountability; and
 v) partnership.

Impact: In a humanitarian context, impact refers to the effect of humanitarian assistance. Impact can be both direct and indirect, and include both positive and negative effects (e.g. a food distribution that has a positive impact on nutrition could also have indirect negative impacts related to standing in line for several hours).

Impartiality: see "humanitarian principles" above.

Implementing Partner: An implementing partner is an organisation that puts into operation humanitarian activities as part of a multi-agency project and usually with funding from another organisation. The term is used within a funding contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between organisations.

Indicator: In a humanitarian context, indicators are measures of emergency conditions, or of programming outcomes in humanitarian operations. Indicators are developed in order to guide programming and for evaluation and monitoring purposes. It is important to ensure that they are relevant to planned objectives, achievable and measurable.

Information Management (IM): Managing information during a humanitarian emergency is a crucial part of any operation: the humanitarian community needs to gather reliable data on the locations of people in need, what they urgently need, who is best placed to assist them for effective and timely humanitarian assistance. Information management involves collecting, processing, organising and distributing information in order to inform, direct and target humanitarian response. Each cluster is responsible for information management in that sector, and OCHA is responsible for multi-sectoral information management. This includes the Who What Where When (4W) database, contact lists and meeting schedules, as well as needs assessment tools and maps. A clear information management structure ensures that all the organisations involved work with the same or complementary information, and that this information is relevant, accurate, and timely.

Integrated Approach: A planning approach that brings together issues from across sectors, and from different humanitarian stakeholders. In some situations, "integration" refers to the principle that wherever the United Nations has a presence involving political and/or peacekeeping missions alongside humanitarian and development actors, these parts of the United Nations should work closely and coherently together.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC): The IASC was established in 1992 to serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies. The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) chairs the IASC and membership includes UN agencies, international organizations (IOM), the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, three international NGO consortia (ICVA, Inter Action and SCHR), the World Bank, and the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on IDPs.

The primary objectives of the IASC are to:
 i) develop and agree on system-wide humanitarian policies;
 ii) develop and agree on a common ethical framework for all humanitarian activities;
 iii) advocate common humanitarian principles to parties outside the IASC;
 iv) identify areas where gaps in mandates or lack of operational capacity exist; and
 v) resolve disputes or disagreement between humanitarian agencies or about system wide humanitarian issues.

Internal Displacement: Involuntary movement of people inside their own country. This movement may be due to a variety of causes, including natural or human-made disasters, armed conflict, or situations of generalized violence.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Persons or groups of persons who remain within the borders of their state of nationality/residence but have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of natural or human-made disasters, armed conflict, or situations of generalized violence.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): A body of law that seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict for humanitarian reasons. It aims to protect persons who are not participating in hostilities and to restrict the means and methods of warfare.

International Refugee Law: The body of international instruments and customary international law that establishes standards for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.

Lessons Learned: A lessons learned exercise is an organisational or multi-agency analysis of a humanitarian response, in order to learn from mistakes, resolve ongoing issues, and identify good practice that can be replicated in future responses.

Livelihoods: In a humanitarian context, livelihoods are the occupation and source of income for an individual or community. Livelihoods may also be referred to as income-generating activities.

Logistics: In a humanitarian context, logistics refers to supply, handling, transportation and distribution of materials in a humanitarian response. The logistics cluster is coordinated by WFP.

Mandate: The legal framework that defines the responsibilities of UN Agencies, peacekeeping operations and other organisations such as the International Committee for the Red Cross. When all organisations have a clear and adequate mandate, it helps to ensure that all humanitarian issues are addressed appropriately and consistently.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): An MoU is a document describing an agreement between two or more parties. It expresses an intention to take action towards an agreed outcome. It is often used where parties either do not want to have a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot create a legally enforceable agreement.

Mitigation: Measures taken to decrease or eliminate the negative impact of an event or disaster.

Monitoring: In a humanitarian context, monitoring refers to observing and measuring humanitarian activities, projects and programmes, so that corrective measures can be taken if needed. Monitoring can be either internal by the organisation itself or be done by and external party such as a partner or donor.

Natural Disaster: An event brought about by natural hazards that seriously affects the environment, economy and infrastructure of a region beyond its capacity to cope, in addition to creating humanitarian needs. Humanitarian needs depend on population vulnerability and local response capacity to natural disasters.

Natural Hazards: Natural events that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO): In a humanitarian context, an NGO is an organisation that carries out humanitarian work, independent of UN agencies and governments.

Office of Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): the UN body that brings together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies.

Operational: In a humanitarian context, operational means directly involved in humanitarian activities. Operational UN agencies or NGOs are involved in providing humanitarian relief, as opposed to the coordination of relief or working through partner agencies.

Participatory Approach: An approach to humanitarian programming in which stakeholders (including beneficiaries) of a policy or intervention are closely involved in the process of identifying problems and priorities, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Pooled Funds: There are three types of pooled funds: the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs), and Emergency Response Funds (ERFs). Pooled funds are operated by OCHA to provide timely, effective and flexible humanitarian financing for emergency response.

Predictability: Predictability is one of three means by which Humanitarian Reform seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response. For example, the cluster approach was developed so that humanitarian actors would be able to predict the organisation of humanitarian coordination and response and plan their own operations accordingly.

Preparedness: Preparedness activities are carried out as part of disaster risk management and should be based on analysis of disaster risk and the various capacities to respond. It can include contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment and supplies, logistics arrangements, communications, information management, coordination arrangements, and personnel training.

Prevention: Prevention activities are designed to avoid the occurrence of hazards, and minimize related disasters. It includes engineering and physical and legal protective measures, e.g. avoiding potential hazards by restricting deforestation and other activities that compromise the environment.

Protection: In a humanitarian context, protection covers a wide range of activities that are aimed at ensuring respect for the rights of all individuals, regardless of age, gender or social, ethnic, national, religious or other background. This requires a collaborative and coordinated response by various national and international actors with diverse mandates, expertise and experience.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): All UN staff and the staff of all organizations working in cooperative arrangements with the UN are prohibited from the sexual exploitation and abuse of any person in the communities in which they are working. Sexual abuse is defined as: "Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from sexual exploitation of another." The UN Secretary-General's Bulletin, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse* describes the standards for protecting vulnerable populations (particularly women and children) from sexual exploitation and abuse.

Principles of Partnership: The Global Humanitarian Platform endorsed The Principles of Partnership in 2007. The principles are equality, complementarity, results based approach, transparency and responsibility.

Reconstruction: Reconstruction is the third of four phases after an emergency: humanitarian, recovery, reconstruction, and development. It is a set of activities aimed at achieving the medium- and long-term return of a community affected by a disaster or emergency, to a functioning society and to enable sustainable development in the future.

Recovery: Recovery goes beyond life saving and focuses on restoring the capacity of government and communities to rebuild after an emergency or crisis. The aim of recovery is to start sustainable development activities, building upon earlier humanitarian programmes so that these inputs contribute to future development.

Refugee: A person forced to flee outside the borders of their State of nationality or residence due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or for reasons owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of their country of origin or nationality.

Refugee Camp: A plot of land temporarily made available to host refugees fleeing from persecution or conflict. UN agencies, particularly UNHCR, and other humanitarian organisations provide essential services in refugee camps including food, sanitation, health, medicine and education.

Rehabilitation: A set of measures aimed at restoring normal living conditions through the repair and reestablishment of services and structures affected by a disaster or emergency.

Relief: Assistance and/or intervention during an emergency to meet the life preserving and basic subsistence needs of a community.

Resettlement: The transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another country that has agreed to admit them. The refugees will usually be granted asylum or some other form of long-term resident rights. Resettlement is a durable solution as well as a tool for the protection of refugees.

Resident Coordinator (RC): The Resident Coordinator is the head of the UN Country Team, and the chief representative of the UN in-country. In a complex emergency or natural disaster, the RC may be designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), or in large-scale complex emergencies and natural disasters, a separate HC may be appointed.

Resilience: The capacity of individuals, community organisations and countries to resist, adapt, and recover from a disaster or crisis, and to restore an acceptable level of functioning and structure.

Rights-based approach: Working in ways that are directly shaped by human rights and human rights principles. It is making sure that the ways of working adhere to human rights principles and these are included in all aspects of the work. It is also about ensuring that these processes will strengthen the overall final rights-related results.

Risk: In a humanitarian context, risk is the degree of danger associated with a natural disaster or potential crisis.

Risk Assessment: Risk assessments are based on the analysis of future hazard or conflict conditions, to inform preparedness activities and disaster risk reduction.

Risk Management: Risk management is a structured way to manage potential danger through risk assessment and the development of strategies and activities to reduce risks. Risk management strategies include avoiding the risk (prevention), and reducing the negative effect of the risk (mitigation).

Risk Mapping: A risk map is a map of a community or geographical zone that identifies the places and structures that might be affected by a disaster. Risk mapping is part of risk management.

Secondary Hazards: Hazards that occur as a result of another hazard or disaster; for example, fires or landslides following earthquakes, or food shortages following drought or floods.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV): see Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Any abuse of vulnerability, power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting from the sexual mistreatment of another person.

Stakeholder: In a humanitarian context, a stakeholder is an individual or organisation involved in or affected by the implementation or outcome of a humanitarian intervention.

Standards: Humanitarian standards are norms and guidelines used in humanitarian response.

Sub cluster: A group within a cluster dealing with a specific theme or issue, e.g. the cash transfer for food sub-cluster is a mechanism within the Food cluster that brings together partners in the cluster working on providing cash or vouchers instead of direct food assistance. The sub-cluster may have a different lead agency than the main cluster.

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to the ability to continue an activity, or a long-lasting impact. Many humanitarian interventions are not usually designed to be maintained over a long period or to produce a long-lasting impact. However, where possible, longer-term needs should be taken into account when responding to acute and immediate needs in order to help rather than hinder the recovery process.

Task Force: A group formed for the purpose of completing a specific task, usually as a sub-group of a more permanent coordination body.

Terms of Reference (ToR): ToR describes the purpose and scope of a function, project, group or meeting. They should provide a documented basis for the process of making future decisions and for confirming or developing a common understanding of the scope between the stakeholders.

Trafficking in Persons: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, hiding or receiving of persons for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes forced extortion, prostitution, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, or the removal of organs. Victims of trafficking have either never consented or their consent was gained by coercion, deception or abuse. Trafficking can occur across borders into another country or from one place to another within the same country.

Transformative Agenda: The Transformative Agenda is an initiative of the IASC in December 2011 to improve international humanitarian response, in particular in the areas of leadership, accountability and coordination. The Transformative Agenda builds upon the Humanitarian Reform process to strengthen the mechanisms and systems of emergency response, with a special focus on large-scale disasters that are known within the UN system as "Level-3" emergencies.

UN Country Team (UNCT): The UNCT is a coordination mechanism for UN agencies in-country. Its objective is to ensure that UN bodies agree their joint response to humanitarian and development strategies in the country in which they are operating.

Voluntary Agencies: Non-governmental agencies or organizations that exist in many countries throughout the world. Some voluntary agencies work at the local, national and international levels, while others are focused in one area or country. Voluntary agencies operate on the basis of their own mandate, and they decide for themselves which areas of work to focus on and how to operate.

Vulnerability: The likelihood of being negatively affected by a disaster, crisis or event. Vulnerability comes from the physical, social, economic and environmental factors that threaten an individual, community, society or organisation.

Working Group: A group usually made up of people representing different organisations, formed for the purpose of developing humanitarian strategies or making humanitarian recommendations on a specific topic.