Joint Statement on Humanitarian Data, Information Management, and Analysis

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Humanitarian data, Information Management (IM), assessments, and analysis are fundamental to the effective planning, delivery, and accountability of humanitarian aid. The decisions based on these data impact millions of people affected by crises. It is critical these decisions are grounded in an informed and impartial understanding of needs and context, ensuring that the humanitarian narrative is driven by evidence rather than political agendas.

As specialised H2H organisations committed to providing independent data and analysis, we welcome the increased focus on these issues, particularly within OCHA's review of its IM and analysis functions. This is an important opportunity to strengthen the sector, and we encourage OCHA to recognise and enhance the role of technical partners in fostering collaboration, partnership, and joint ownership.

We believe OCHA has a crucial role in leading an invigorated strategy for data, IM, assessments, and analysis within the sector, and present the following recommendations to support this:

1. Enhanced Leadership and Coordination
OCHA's role in coordinating humanitarian data, assessments, analysis, and IM is vital, and it should prioritise outcome-oriented approaches that complement existing efforts and minimise inefficiencies. While successes such as the growth of the Centre for Humanitarian Data (CHD) should be built on, the complexity of overlapping initiatives and platforms creates inefficiencies, redundancy, and unhealthy competition.

Recommendations:
    1.1 Streamline leadership and coordination: We stress the need for a clear and consistent vision and call for more streamlined coordination that maximises impact while minimising bureaucratic overload. OCHA should clearly designate focal points for IM, data, assessments, and analysis services, while reviewing their internal roles and responsibilities, reducing complexity for partners.
    1.2 Enhance coordination architecture: Clarify and strengthen the role of existing coordination fora like the IM Working Group and Assessment and Analysis Working Group, based on field success stories. Make these mechanisms outcome-focused, with clear mandates, Terms of Reference and integrated NGO co-leadership.
    1.3 Increased partner engagement: As needs grow and funding decreases, the expanding ecosystem of local and global technical partners and data providers requires proactive engagement with diverse actors. OCHA should collaborate openly and consistently with stakeholders to enhance coordination at the country, regional, and global levels.

2. Establish Clear Standards and Guidelines
The lack of standardised guidance challenges the consistency and credibility of humanitarian responses, with decisions in different contexts informed by data and analysis that is inconsistent in its extent and quality. Though progress has been made in ethical and technical standards, OCHA should promote the collective development of clear, actionable standards that ensure data reliability, transparency and comparability across different operational contexts, while safeguarding

the integrity of data and ensuring contextual relevance through community and local engagement, allowing diverse actors to contribute without compromising on technical rigour.

Recommendations:

2.1 Consistent data supporting diverse analysis: Promote the collective development and use of standardised data methodologies across country operations to ensure consistent and reliable information on crisis-affected people's needs, priorities and capacities. While quantitative data remains essential, it is important to complement this with qualitative research methods that are informed by the experiences and voices of affected populations.

2.2 Protect data credibility: Put in place the necessary incentives, structures, and protections to safeguard data and analysis services from political interference and other threats, either at response or global level. OCHA must recognise that influencing and politicising data and information is a reality of today's conflicts.

2.3 Close gaps in skills and capacities: OCHA should advocate for funding and support for the development of capacities at the operational level, addressing the data skills gap. OCHA is well placed to support analysis guidelines and training materials for humanitarians with different technical levels, prioritising support for local actors.

3. Enhance Data Platforms and Integration

The fragmented nature of the current humanitarian data landscape severely impacts accessibility, interoperability and efficiency. We now have an important ecosystem of humanitarian actors producing data and analytical tools and OCHA has a critical role to play in supporting this by consolidating and sharing available data in humanitarian settings, creating centralised, integrated platforms that serve as a comprehensive resource for all humanitarians.

Recommendations:

3.1 Centralised platform: Develop a user-friendly, accessible platform integrating existing tools and solutions, facilitating seamless data access, sharing, and reporting; and provide clear visibility to existing tools and data by different actors. The development of the Humanitarian-API (HAPI) by the CHD is promising but should be expanded to other providers.

3.2 Granular and disaggregated data: Ensure the availability of detailed, disaggregated data, including gender, age, and disability information. The humanitarian sector has struggled to achieve the basics and OCHA's leadership is required to effect positive change.

3.3 Collaborative engagement with governments: OCHA should use its mandate to strengthen collaboration with national governments to secure access to official datasets, such as national censuses, integrate these into humanitarian planning, and provide support to foster alignment of the humanitarian data system to those of state authorities.

4. Advancing Analytical Capabilities

To effectively respond to evolving crises, particularly those driven by climate change, the humanitarian sector must adopt advanced analytical tools and methodologies. OCHA must ensure that data is safeguarded against politicisation, especially in conflict settings, while analysis should remain open to diverse interpretations that account for uncertainties. Too much focus on consensus risks marginalising important viewpoints, particularly in highly complex or ambiguous crises.

Recommendations:

4.1 Streamlined analytical tools: consolidate and simplify existing analytical tools and frameworks, reducing redundancy and making it easier for humanitarian actors to access

and utilise the tools they need. Favor as much as possible low-tech, open source and interoperable tools to improve accessibility by local actors.

4.2 Climate data integration: Prioritise the incorporation of climate data into humanitarian analysis, enabling more anticipatory and effective responses to climate-related emergencies.

4.3 Ethical AI and crowdsourcing: OCHA should leverage its convening power to facilitate dialogue on the ethical use of AI and crowdsourcing, ensuring new technologies enhance efforts without compromising ethical standards or humanitarian principles, mitigating against the risk of misinformation, data breaches, and bias.

Conclusion

By acting on these recommendations, OCHA can significantly enhance the coordination, credibility, and impact of humanitarian data and analysis efforts. We call for coordination that supports and provides space for independent actors and the data they provide. For shared success, it's vital that the organisations involved are adequately resourced and we encourage OCHA and other stakeholders to continue supporting partnerships that enable all actors, especially local and technical partners, to contribute effectively.

As members of the H2H Network, we are ready to collaborate with OCHA in shaping a more unified and effective humanitarian response. We are committed to bringing our capacities and experience in supporting the development of solutions to the issues outlined, at country and global level.

Sincerely,

Bram Frouws – Director, Mixed Migration Centre

Christina Wille – Director, Insecurity Insight

Christophe Bois – Executive Director, 3iSolution

Colin Rogers – CEO, MapAction

Daniel Power – Managing Director, Flowminder

Fabrizio Scrollini - Acting Co-Executive Director, Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team

Karin Maasel – CEO, Data Friendly Space

Kim Scriven – Executive Director, H2H Network

Lars Peter Nissen – Director, ACAPS

Luca Pupulin – CEO, IMPACT

Meg Sattler – CEO, Ground Truth Solutions

Pauline Michavila – Co-executive Director, CartONG