



Eastern Africa NGOs Brief for the Announcements Plenary

The following statement is informed by outcomes of various WHS consultations undertaken in the last three years by humanitarian stakeholders including NGOs represented within the Inter-Agency Working Group for Eastern Africa.

Context

The Eastern Africa region experiences protracted conflicts, prolonged and climate induced droughts, often resulting in large scale forced displacement, resource based conflict and critical humanitarian emergencies. It hosts an estimated 3.3 million refugees with 11 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Some families have lived in exile for more than 20 years with immense suffering.

The region has seen a gradual reduction in overall humanitarian funding. In 2016, only 14% of the total \$5.5 billion required is funded. In 2015, of the US\$ 7.1 billion required only 42.6% was funded. The needs of over 14 million displaced people must be addressed. The UN Secretary General report emphasises the need for greater investment in people, local actors and national systems.

There is an urgent need for a paradigm shift to address displacement issues in the region to; strengthen coordination efforts; localize responses to protracted displacement; leverage NGO and national actor advocacy capacity for innovative interventions; and ensure global resources to the region are applied more effectively and supportively to national actors including NGOs in the region.

NOGs are mandated to engage communities including refugees and displaced and to provide essential services and support. To put communities first, NGOs need to greatly improve community engagement approaches so that they are supported to play their full role. To achieve this, there is need for inter-greater agency collaboration that includes local government to maximise response effectiveness, context understanding and cost effectiveness.

NGO messages

NGOs stress the importance of action more than mere commitments from member states, the UN, the international community, NGOs and all actors engaged in humanitarian action.

Preventing and responding to protracted conflict and displacement

1. Support joint early warning mechanisms and early action to prevent and mitigate conflict and election-related violence. A regional approach such as the IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism is important.

2. Leverage NGO capacity to work more closely with national and local government systems through advocacy and strategic engagement in developing and utilizing early warning information and to invest more in strengthening the full involvement of local communities

3. Localization of humanitarian aid: Increase and strengthen local action

1. NGOs both international and local appreciate the need to greatly improve how they engage with communities so that communities play their rightful role in addressing the challenges they face.
2. Leveraging NGOs capacity and commitment to facilitate more localized responses to protracted displacement in the region. Increase protection for IDPs, refugees and develop innovative durable solutions in consultation with the displaced.
3. Investing in strengthening local capacities for early warning, preparedness and response, integrating national capacity strengthening in humanitarian and development action.

Strengthen Humanitarian Coordination

1. Leverage NGO capacity to act quickly when a disaster strikes and ensure that emergency action is integrated to community led longer-term responses when the immediate emergency is addressed. This requires improved coordination among NGOs, government and other actors.
2. Strengthen the role of regional and national humanitarian actors to advocate for the adoption of policies and strategies that engage communities to effectively respond to emergencies and build resilience of IDPS and refugees.

Flexible and predictable financing

1. Commit to support harmonization of aid requirements among donors and the international community, including flexibility in programme design to incorporate change in circumstances especially based on community engagement responses.
2. Commit to encourage direct financing of national NGOs so that they play a central role in the programming, decision making and delivery of principled and coordinated humanitarian assistance that incorporates community engagement approaches.
3. Direct national resources and international financing towards national and local systems that improve services and opportunities for displaced persons and host communities.

Partnerships: facilitate principles of equality, transparency, responsibility & complementarity

1. Strengthen the network of NGOs and local communities in developing and advocating for relevant laws, programmes and joint strategies that encourage active community participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships.

NGOs in the region are committed to promoting risk-informed development, the full and deliberate engagement of local community especially the most affected as key players – not just passive recipients; to link early warning to early financing for early action and to ensure funding is accessible to local NGOs in a timely, predictable and simple manner.

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