

: Programme

Berlin Summer Dialogue 2012 International Disaster Relief. The challenges posed by fragile states and climate change

Berlin Town Hall

13-14 September 2012

In cooperation with:

adelphi, Berlin

Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Berlin

German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV), Bonn

State Office for Development Cooperation at the Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Research, Berlin (SenWTF), Berlin

Conference languages:

German/English

(Simultaneous translation)

BACKGROUND

There has been a dramatic increase in natural disasters in recent years. According to the International Disaster Database, at least 300,000 people were killed as a result of natural disasters in 2010. There is evidence that climate change is contributing to the increased frequency and intensity of weather-related natural events. However, it is the vulnerability of the affected regions which is the key determinant of whether droughts, floods and storms escalate into disasters. Developing countries in particular are highly susceptible to natural disasters and often rely on external assistance to manage them and mitigate their effects. International disaster relief therefore plays a key role in meeting the basic needs of the survivors, as well as in the reconstruction effort. The growing number of natural disasters poses particular challenges to international aid agencies, however: they are now having to respond more frequently, quickly and comprehensively, but with limited financial and operational resources.

International disaster relief plays a particular critical role when natural disasters occur in fragile states. Weak institutions, a high level of corruption and lack of logistics prevent targeted delivery and effective coordination of local and international aid. In extreme cases, a lack of security may mean that aid agencies cannot operate without support from the military. In many cases, foreign aid workers dominate local decision-making structures, which further undermines the state's already weak governance capacities. This jeopardises the important transition from emergency relief to long-term reconstruction and development, and increases these countries' dependency on international aid.

The changing climate also presents international aid organisations with specific challenges. There is a growing expectation that disaster relief will include measures to support adaptation to climate change, develop a resilient infrastructure and improve local mitigation capacities. This is particularly important in fragile states with little or no disaster preparedness capacities. However, critics of this approach argue that this places excessive burdens on disaster relief, and emphasise the short-term nature of its deployment.

The Berlin Summer Dialogue 2012, hosted by the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF), will explore the specific challenges which fragile states and climate change present for international disaster relief. What are the implications of a changing climate for relief strategies? How conflict-sensitive is international disaster relief in fragile states? What kind of donor and aid structures are required for an adequate response to these challenges? Together with international experts, the SEF is keen to explore the opportunities and risks associated with international disaster relief in fragile states and also identify options for its further development in response to climate change.

: Thursday, 13 September 2012

10.00 hrs Registration

WELCOME

11.00 hrs **Dr Richard Meng**
State Secretary and Berlin Senate Spokesman, Berlin

Emeritus Professor Knut Ipsen
President of the German Red Cross (ret.), Bochum
Member of the Board of Trustees of the
Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

PART I INTRODUCTION

Chair
Bärbel Dieckmann
President
Welthungerhilfe, Bonn
Member of the Board of Trustees of the
Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)

11.20 hrs Keynotes

“Weather-Related Natural Disasters: Future Scenarios”
Thomas R. Loster
Chairman
Munich Re Foundation, Munich

“The Particular Vulnerability of Fragile States”
Professor Mo Hamza
Visiting Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Director, Global Climate Adaptation Partnership, UK

12.00 hrs Plenary discussion

12.45 hrs Lunch

PART II

NECESSARY – BUT TOO MUCH?

DISASTER SCENARIOS: THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S RESPONSIBILITY

Natural disasters claim lives – particularly in developing countries, where casualty figures are often very high. The international community has signed up to various agreements – such as the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Hyogo Framework for Action – in which it commits to provide assistance to countries affected by disasters, but emphasises that the primary responsibility lies with the countries themselves. This becomes a problem if the national governments are unable or unwilling to meet their responsibilities. The calls for Haiti to become an international protectorate and for the responsibility to protect (R2P) to be invoked in the case of Myanmar raise questions about how much international intervention is permissible in response to a disaster. There is criticism, too, of the increasing extent to which international disaster relief is influenced by donor countries' foreign policy and security interests: it is claimed that a selective approach is applied to the distribution of funds from governments' aid budgets, and that disaster relief is used as a pretext to legitimise governments' foreign policy and even military intervention. This panel will therefore consider the international community's responsibility in disaster scenarios and identify the problems of, and limits to, external engagement.

Key questions

What is the international community's responsibility when disasters occur? To what extent should the international community intervene in response to a disaster? Where do the limits of international engagement lie? How do the donor countries' foreign and security policy interests affect disaster relief? How can the international community resist the temptation to focus solely on the humanitarian impacts of disasters, ignoring its own responsibilities before they occur?

Chair

Emeritus Professor Knut Ipsen

President of the German Red Cross (ret.), Bochum

14.00 hrs

Input

Ina Lepel

Deputy Director General for Global Issues

Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

13.50 hrs

Comments

Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel

Director

Brot für die Welt, Stuttgart

Marcus Oxley

Executive Director

Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction, London

14.15 hrs

Plenary discussion

15.00 hrs

Coffee break

PART III**DO NO HARM!****INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF IN FRAGILE STATES**

Fragile states are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. In Haiti, weak governance structures made it impossible to meet the Haitian people's basic needs even before the earthquake occurred, and greatly impeded the international disaster response afterwards. The "do no harm" principle is crucially important in fragile states: international aid workers must ensure that they act in a conflict-sensitive manner and support, rather than replace, local stakeholders' effort to safeguard security, coordinate aid and resolve logistical issues. The deployment of the military in response to a disaster must also be very carefully considered and all factors, for and against, must be weighed up, in order to avoid any harm coming to the local population and foreign workers alike. This panel will therefore discuss the challenges associated with international disaster relief in fragile states and analyse possible strategies for a conflict-neutral response.

Key questions

What are the challenges facing international disaster relief in fragile states? How important is civil-military cooperation, and how should this be evaluated? How can international disaster relief in fragile states proceed in a manner which is as conflict-sensitive as possible? How strongly does the "do no harm" principle resonate through its practical work?

Chair

Professor Hans-Joachim HeintzeInstitute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict
Ruhr University Bochum

16.30 hrs

Input

Colonel (GS) Christian Wilhelm Meyer

Lecturer

University for Science of Public Administration, Speyer

16.45 hrs

Comments

Professor Lothar Brock

Visiting Professor

Peace Research Institute (PRIF), Frankfurt/Main
Member of the Advisory Board of the
Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)**Atta Muhammad Durrani**

Country Programme Manager

German Red Cross (IFRC), Islamabad

Dr Ulrike von Pilar

Humanitarian Advisor

Médecins Sans Frontières, Berlin

17.30 hrs

Plenary discussion

18.30 HRS**LECTURE AND RECEPTION**

Hosted by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Input by **Dr Roman Poeschke**, Director Division for Security, Reconstruction and Peace at GIZ, followed by reception

: Friday, 14 September 2012

PART IV

RESPONSIVE AND PREVENTIVE. INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change makes the already very complex task of providing disaster relief even more difficult. The frequency and intensity of flooding, droughts and storms and the severity of their impacts are increasing as a result of climate change, threatening to overwhelm mitigation capacities, especially in fragile regions. Adaptation to climate change aims to reduce the vulnerability of societies and enhance disaster relief activities through their preventive approach. The strengthening of local adaptive capacities and the participation of the affected population play a key role in this context. At the same time, it cannot automatically be assumed that the various stakeholders involved in disaster relief and adaptation are necessarily coordinating their activities with each other. This panel will explore the role of climate change adaptation measures in the aid agencies' practical operations, the extent to which these measures are reinforced through development cooperation, and where the limits to an integrated approach lie.

Key questions

How significant are the challenges posed by climate change for international aid agencies? How is this reflected in their practical work? How can measures to reduce vulnerability be integrated into disaster relief strategies? Which opportunities, risks and problems can be identified? Which measures can be taken to ensure that the demands made of international disaster relief are not excessive? Where do the limits lie?

Chair

Dennis Tänzler

Head of Climate and Energy Policies
adelphi, Berlin

09.00 hrs

Welcome

Christoph von Knobelsdorff

State Secretary
Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Research (SenWTF), Berlin

09.15 hrs

Input

Dr Maarten van Aalst

Director
Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, The Hague

09.30 hrs

Comments

Professor Wolf Dombrowsky

Steinbeis-Hochschule Berlin

Janani Vivekananda

Climate Change and Conflict Adviser
International Alert, London

Mike Wiggins

Environmental Sustainability Advisor
Tearfund, Teddington

10.15 hrs

Plenary discussion

11.15 hrs

Coffee break

PART V**FROM SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM.****SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES FOR DISASTER RELIEF IN FRAGILE STATES
AND IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

It has been apparent for some time that international disaster relief can no longer be confined to mitigating the impacts of extreme natural events. What is needed, instead, is a “joined-up” strategy which links emergency aid with measures for long-term reconstruction and development. The challenges posed by fragile states and climate change in particular demonstrate the need to develop sustainable strategies for affected regions; emergency relief projects must incorporate measures for adaptation to climate change, and infrastructure-building must go hand in hand with support for governance and institutional capacity building. Yet in international disaster relief, a long-term approach is not easy to put into practice. Funding gaps at national and at international level make it more difficult to achieve stronger linkage between emergency relief and long-term development. With reference to the outcomes of the previous panel discussions, this session will therefore look at possible strategies for international disaster relief which take account of the challenges posed by fragile states and climate change.

Key questions

How can the transition from emergency relief to longer-term reconstruction and development be managed? How should international disaster relief be structured with a view to safeguarding this transition? How should long-term international disaster relief strategies be designed in order to take account of the specific challenges posed by fragile states and climate change? Which changes to donor and aid structures are needed in order to sensitise international disaster relief to fragile states and climate change?

Chair

Karl-Otto Zentel

Chief Executive Officer

German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV), Bonn

11.45 hrs

Input

Andrew Wyllie

Chief a.i Programme Support Branch

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Geneva

12.15 hrs

Comment

Professor Wolf-Dieter Eberwein

President (ret.)

Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), Brussels

12.30 hrs

Plenary discussion

13.15 hrs

Closing remarks by the organisers

Dr Michèle Roth

Executive Director

Development and Peace Foundation (SEF), Bonn

followed by refreshment