Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience

CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UN)
ACF	Action contre la Faim
ALNAP	Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Revolving Fund
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation Commission
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
EC	European Commission
ECHA	Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPS	Executive Committee on Peace and Security
EHI	Emergency Humanitarian Initiative
EMG	Emergency Management Group
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)
FCU	Field Coordination Unit
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FSAU	Food Security Assessment Unit
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIST	Geographic Information Systems Team
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCIC	Humanitarian Community Information Centre
HIS	Health Information System
HLO	Humanitarian Liaison Officers
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
IACU	Inter-Agency Coordination Unit
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
JIAS	Joint Interim Administrative Structure
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MOVCON	Movement Control Centres
MSF	Médicins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Office of the Executive Delegate
OEOA	Office for Emergency Operations in Africa
OFDA	US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAID	Policy Advocacy and Information Department
PCVO	Programme Compliance and Violations Committee
RC	Resident Coordinator
RR	Resident Representative
SACB	Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SG	Secretary-General
SHAPE	Structured Humanitarian Assistance Reporting
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TCOR	Special Relief Operations Service (FAO)
TNG	Transitional National Government
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCAH	United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit for Angola
UN	United Nations
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNCU	United Nations Coordination Unit for Somalia
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRC	United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNDRO	Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo
UNOCA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia (I)
UNPOS	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
UNREO	United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSECOORD	United Nations Security Coordinator
UNSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia (II)
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	Under-Secretary-General
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WHO	World Health Organisation

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A study commissioned by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

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'The United Nations did not respond as a system but rather as a series of separate and largely autonomous agencies. Each had its own institutional dynamics, formulated its own priorities, and moved according to a timetable of its own devising.' [1]

'The simple reality is that within the diverse UN family, no element has adequate authority to command, coerce or compel any other element to do anything. [This could be called] "Coordination light".' [2]

'The system was characterised by a hollow core. Far from having a strong capacity at the centre to provide leadership and overall coordination to a system involving not just eight UN agencies, but donor organisation teams, military and civil defence contingents, government agencies and over two hundred NGOs involved in the response during 1994, the centre was weak, poorly resourced and lacking in organisational clarity.' [3]

'In the response to serious emergencies one ingredient governs the quality of all others – management....UN agencies argue that there must always be "flexibility according to each emergency situation". This contention, together with the competition for high profile vis-à-vis donors, has made an institution of the ad hoc approach. Flexibility is certainly essential; but it flows from, and is not a substitute for, properly established crisis management.' [4]

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[1] Minear, L., Clark, J., Cohen, R., Gallagher, D., Guest, I. & Weiss, T. (1994) *Humanitarian Action in the Former Yugoslavia: The UN's Role 1991–1993* (Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 18.

[2] Minear, L. (1998) 'Learning to Learn – A Discussion Paper prepared for OCHA for the conference Humanitarian Coordination – Lessons Learned, Stockholm, 3–4 April 1998.

[3] Borton, J. (1996) An Account of Coordination Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance during the International Response to the 1994 Crisis in Rwanda', ADMP Series No 22 (Advanced Development Management Program, Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University: Tokyo).

[4] Childers, E. & Urquhart, B. (1991) 'Towards a More Effective United Nations' in *Development Dialogue* 1991 (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation: Uppsala, Sweden) p. 60.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In September 2000, the Policy Development Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) commissioned the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to undertake an independent study on humanitarian coordination. The aim was to sharpen thinking on UN humanitarian coordination in the light of processes underway in the UN. These include debates on how the UN chooses coordination arrangements, the report of the UN Panel on Peace Operations – the Brahimi report[5] – and OCHA's own Change Management Process.

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Draw lessons from recent experiences in humanitarian coordination.
2. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of UN coordination models – that is, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator or so-called 'combined model', the model where the Humanitarian Coordinator is separate from the Resident Coordinator, and the 'lead agency model' – in particular circumstances.
3. Identify features of coordination arrangements which have provided 'added value'.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) further specified a range of questions on specific aspects of coordination including the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), access, information, sectoral coordination, strategic monitoring, and the relationship between humanitarian, development, political and military actors.

The study's methodology was a review of studies of coordination over the last decade, more than 250 interviews with UN, NGOs, the Red Cross Movement, governments, donors and the military, and three case studies of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Kosovo, each based on a week-long visit by the study team. Although the study's focus was the coordination of, and by, the humanitarian agencies of the UN system, as the range of interviewees suggests, the study drew on the experiences and perspective of all those implicated in UN coordination.

The study team encountered a number of constraints, one of which was to address the broad scope of the study and do justice to the wealth of material gathered. Interviewees also challenged the ToR's neglect of humanitarian coordination in natural disasters as a perpetuation of the division between those working in and on natural disasters as opposed to complex emergencies.

SECTION 2: COORDINATION – AN OVERVIEW

2.1 Historical Overview

The UN humanitarian system is composed of six key actors – UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, WHO and UNDP – each established by separate treaties, with its own governance mechanism. The first attempt to establish a comprehensive framework to organise this system was General Assembly Resolution 2816 of 14 December 1971, which created the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) 'to mobilise, direct and coordinate relief.' UNDRO was not a success, and two decades later, prompted also by dissatisfaction with other ad hoc coordination arrangements and Gulf war experiences, General Assembly Resolution 46/182 was passed.

Resolution 46/182 created the post of Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), among other measures. The following year, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) headed by the ERC, also designated Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. In 1994 the IASC approved ToR for Humanitarian Coordinators and in 1997 further refined the options and the criteria to select them. As part of the 1997 reform programme of Secretary-General Annan, the DHA was replaced by a new office with a more streamlined mandate focused on coordination, advocacy and policy development: OCHA.

[5] Brahimi, L. (2000) *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* A/55/305 S/2000/809 (United Nations: New York) August.

Today, the combined Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator model exists in 14 complex emergencies, the lead agency model in two cases, and six countries have separate Humanitarian Coordinators.

2.2 Defining Coordination

While defining *why* coordination is important may be not be contentious within the UN, defining who coordinates and how it is done provokes fierce debate. Distinctions between strategic and operational coordination are used to fight inter-agency battles about who does what, and reinforce the impression that there are areas of humanitarian response that are unrelated to strategy and all that this implies by way of analysis, goals and monitoring. Also unresolved is whether coordination is a minimal activity preventing duplication and overlap or a more integrating activity that seeks to harmonise responses as part of a single programme or strategy.

One of the definitions used repeatedly in past studies of coordination stood out as potentially useful to the UN:

> *Coordination is the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilising resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labour, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership.*[6]

This definition emphasises coordination functions that are often missing or weak in UN humanitarian coordination. These include:

- The importance of using policy instruments in systematic ways – that is, in an organised way according to established procedures rather than in an ad hoc manner;
- The emphasis on cohesion, bringing elements of a response together;
- The focus on planning, managing information, accountability, functional divisions of labour and sustaining frameworks with political authorities.

2.3 The Changing Context of Humanitarian Coordination

This study was required to focus primarily on the conduct of UN coordination within the humanitarian system. Such an 'intra-humanitarian' focus can obscure the significance of political and military actors in facilitating or obstructing humanitarian action. The frequent absence or weakness of legitimate government to prioritise and implement policy creates the UN's coordination challenge in the first place. The violence and insecurity facing civilians and those that seek to help them are also sickeningly familiar challenges to humanitarian action and its coordination.

Newer challenges include the increasing fragmentation and bilateral management of resources for humanitarian assistance, and thus a reduction in the share of resources received by the UN. Humanitarian aid as a share of rich countries' wealth is also falling. This is a clarion call for advocacy.

Donors are making greater demands of humanitarian actors to uphold performance standards and increase accountability. For some, this requires greater field capacity to scrutinise and even coordinate humanitarian activity. Case studies suggest there are some donors – the European Commission in particular – who have the capacity and interest to fill any coordination vacuums left by a discredited or ineffective UN. The consequences of this remain unexplored.

The added momentum given to debates on peacebuilding strategies by the Brahimi report, with its as yet undefined role for humanitarians in such activities may prove the latest attempt to explicitly coopt humanitarian action to deliver on wider political goals of peace and security. This could have commensurate coordination difficulties as NGOs and other humanitarians are forced to distance themselves explicitly from a non-neutral UN in the interest of preserving their humanitarian identity, central to efforts to sustain access to civilians in need.

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[6] Minear, L., Chelliah., U, Crisp, J., Mackinlay, J. & Weiss, T. (1992) *UN Coordination of the International Humanitarian Response to the Gulf Crisis 1990–1992* (Thomas J Watson Institute for International Studies: Providence, Rhode Island) Occasional Paper 13.

SECTION 3: OBSTACLES AND INCENTIVES TO COORDINATION

While the context sketched above presents some of the external challenges to the UN's coordination role, the study focused in greater detail on challenges more internal to the UN. Past studies, interviews and case studies reveal a picture of structural, institutional and management obstacles to coordination.

3.1 Structural Obstacles

Although described as a system, there is little about the combined structure of the UN's funds, agencies and programmes that is systematic. Each is required to respond to the often-divergent imperatives set by their different governance structures influenced by the political interests of UN Member States. In the same way, while donors vociferously demand coordination, donor earmarking, micro-management, visibility concerns and political agendas all thwart it. Donors have also proved weak at coordinating themselves.

UN agencies' demonstrated preoccupation with securing donor approval further weakens the coordination imperative. The push for profile necessary to attract funding posits sister agencies as competitors in a market they perceive to be shrinking. OCHA appears particularly vulnerable in this environment that makes market competitors out of humanitarian collaborators as donor enthusiasm for OCHA appears to correlate directly with UN agency mistrust.

3.2 Institutional Obstacles

The competition for funds exacerbates institutional cultures that foster agency allegiance over system-wide loyalty, where staff commitment to coordinated outcomes is neither required nor rewarded. Agencies have proved unwilling to release their 'best people' for secondment into coordination functions, preferring to retain them to deliver their agency's mandate. Some argue that maintaining effective agency operations has the greatest direct impact on beneficiaries – the fundamental concern for humanitarians. Yet effective coordination increases the impact of the overall response. Requiring staff to coordinate and seconding skilled staff to play co-ordination roles are essential to the system's performance.

However, where Coordinators are perceived to have vested institutional interests – for instance, having joint responsibility for operations and coordination – they are likely to attract hostility and be unsuccessful in their coordination role. This is also true of the UN system as a whole where some agencies are prone to focus on UN matters to the exclusion or neglect of NGOs and the Red Cross Movement, who are key players and partners in humanitarian response.

3.3 Management Obstacles

Weak management compounds these structural and institutional difficulties. Such weakness is manifest in the 'adhocracy' that this study concludes characterises the UN's coordination. Comparing one situation to another, there is little that is done in a systematic way. While some claim this shows flexibility, it in fact reveals decisions not made, conflicts not resolved, and the influence of politics on management decisions. This appears to be true of all levels in the UN. In practice it results in staff with unclear roles, responsibilities, reporting lines and accountabilities, and huge numbers of people sent into the field with little induction or guidance on fundamental matters.

Ad interim arrangements are another facet of this ad hoc approach that highlights one of the apparent ironies of 'flexible' arrangements: they are both vulnerable to be changed at any moment, and may be left to fester with dysfunctions going ignored. They are also a prime example of how adhocracy puts a huge onus on individuals to work things out on the ground. On the positive side, not having requirements or systems set in stone offers room for innovation. Negatively, the weak management associated with adhocracy allows the incompetent to underperform or create chaos. Such adhocracy seems to be built into the UN system, both as a product and cause of the resistance to coordination.

3.4 The Ingredients of Success

In the face of such obstacles, coordination is against the odds. However, **coordination does happen where contexts conducive to coordination dilute the impact of obstacles**, such as small numbers of humanitarian agencies, where relationships among agencies have been built over time, and where shared technical expertise facilitates communication and increases focus on how to achieve shared goals rather than agency profiles.

Coordination also happens where incentives to coordinate are increased – whether because agencies have to work together in the interests of their own security or to achieve access to beneficiaries, or where donor or media scrutiny requires it or supports it. Coordinators vested with control of access or funds at critical stages in the response also provided a powerful incentive to others to coordinate, provided these elements were in the hands of those with a mentality of inclusion and service-orientation.

Agencies can be persuaded to coordinate where coordination clearly adds value. A crucial ingredient here is leadership. Two key elements in leadership are effective managerial skills and analytical skills that offer clarity, structure and direction for both field operations and humanitarian advocacy. The team was struck by the significance of the 'intellectual route' to authority and influence within the UN. Committed, experienced, competent Coordinators who foster trust, build teams, and focus on humanitarian response rather than an agency add value. Yet adding value also depends on having sufficient and skilled support staff to perform essential coordination functions.

If adhocracy is one of the obstacles to coordination, so **making coordination more systematic** is its antidote. Although removing many of the obstacles to coordination depend on the actions of Member States and donors, the above analysis suggests the UN will maximise the likelihood of effective coordination by consistently ensuring that:

- Coordinators have sufficient competence, management skills, dynamism and vision to give them authority to persuade or encourage others to coordinate.
- Coordinators have elements of command at their fingertips, such as control over funding and access, in order to increase the incentives or requirements of others to coordinate.
- Coordination is carried out by those who do not have vested institutional interests but rather provide services for the whole system, and for whom coordination is a full-time job.
- The Coordinator is supported by skilled staff to perform essential functions and services.
- There is effective accountability for coordination through clear structures and reporting lines, including clarity on who deputises for the Coordinator and what his/her responsibilities will be. This requires monitoring and assessment to ensure that good performance is rewarded and poor performance is sanctioned.

The benefits of planning in advance, having rosters of available staff and well-written Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) are also ingredients of more systematic responses.

Yet there is **one further key ingredient** for effective humanitarian action and coordination upon which even the best laid plans and procedures depend: a focus on the people who are in need. No structures or incentives can compensate for lack of commitment to an effective, coordinated response to the needs of beneficiaries.

SECTION 4: THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COORDINATION MODELS

The previous section set out some of essential ingredients of effective coordination, namely that it is recognised as a full-time task requiring particular skills and competencies, and that it must be resourced, performed and respected as such. The coordination role requires skilled support teams, clear lines of accountability for coordination, and that coordination is carried out by players with no vested interest who perform a service for whole system.

These ingredients should have a bearing on how the UN selects coordination arrangements. They provide clear criteria for any coordination structure to fulfil. Yet the study concluded that the selection of coordination arrangements seems only weakly connected with both the lessons from past performance and the demands of the context. The interests of the Secretary-General and the major UN operational agencies seem to prevail in decisions that focus on the top of coordination structures – that is, how they get led – and pays little attention to specifying what and how coordination services and functions are provided. (Tensions around the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships of OCHA field staff are a direct result of this.) Thus the study concludes that the **IASC should focus more on specifying the composition, functions and competencies of coordination teams and structures, not solely responsibilities at the top.**

Although the study disputes that the models as specified by the UN are the key determinants of coordination outcomes – arguing that the role of host governments or authorities, the actors involved in coordination and their respective geographical location, and the nature and frequency of coordination activities are all significant – the study presented assessments of their respective strengths and weaknesses.

The combined role of **Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator** provides a sense of uniformity to arrangements globally, and can contribute to bridging the relief–development gap. UNDP's willingness to bear the cost of coordination is another point in its favour. Yet many interviewees expressed doubts about Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators' ability to carry out robust humanitarian diplomacy, for example, on the rights of refugees or IDPs. The fiercest criticism is the lack of humanitarian coordination experience or skills of existing Resident Coordinators. The study concludes that **if the Secretary-General and IASC members continue to favour appointing Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators, this should be accompanied by a number of measures to mitigate the disadvantages,** including a pool of candidates that are agreed to be suitably qualified, more rigorous performance monitoring, and decisive approaches to replace those not up to the job.

The logic behind the use of the **lead agency model** is undeniable. Where one agency is overwhelmingly present, it makes sense to use the infrastructure in place for the benefit of coordination. In theory the model also appears attractive because it comes closest to institutionalising 'command functions' within one agency. However, in practice the evidence suggests that it has **not been possible for an agency with operational responsibilities to coordinate for the benefit of the system.** Lead agencies have tended to mould the emergency in their own image, to favour their own programme rather than focus on the overall response, and to interpret coordination as control. Yet lead agencies have insufficient control to compel others to coordinate, and in practice have undertaken insufficient consensus-building efforts to persuade others to coordinate. If there were effective personnel rosters to establish rapid response coordination teams in the earliest days of an emergency, the problematic option of carving capacity out of the lead agency would no longer be necessary.

The team concluded that there is a **strong case for the IASC to favour the Humanitarian Coordinator being separate from the Resident Coordinator.** This is not least due to concern at the dearth of suitable candidates for the positions of Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and the slow pace at which the pool of competent candidates is being enlarged. It also stems from a recognition of the scale of the challenges faced in humanitarian coordination such as the importance of leadership in overcoming the obstacles to coordination within the UN, and the importance of advocacy and negotiating access. This is so particularly in cases of large-scale rapid onset emergencies where territorial control is divided among belligerents. The team was struck that this opinion was widely held among interviewees. Their view contrasted with that of the IASC in arguing that this option should be the rule rather than the exception. To address the risk that separate Coordinators entrench false distinctions between relief and development in intellectual or operational terms, the UN will need clear strategies to guide its action and strong collaboration among all those on the ground. Secondments from operational agencies to the post of Humanitarian Coordinator should be actively sought.

SECTION 5: HOW COORDINATION GETS DONE

Section 5 elaborates on the study's recurring theme that effective coordination adds value to humanitarian response by performing key tasks and offering a range of services and skills to humanitarian agencies. The report sets out some of the ingredients that make such tasks, services and tools more or less helpful, as well as challenges associated with providing them.

5.1 Coordinating Integrated Responses – Tasks and Techniques

Analysis: The fact that the IASC's list of strategic coordination functions excludes analysis and that donors show little interest in agencies' understanding of their environment reinforces the notion that analysis is an optional extra. Yet in the words of one interviewee, *'Offering a compelling vision of what can be achieved based on sound analysis of context is perhaps the greatest value added ever offered to coordination.'* Such analysis underpins effective strategies, including those to ensure that humanitarian aid does more good than harm. Good contextual knowledge and situational analysis are critical elements of effective security management. Analysis is also a vital part of learning lessons, which is currently weak. Both Coordinators and their team members require strong analytical skills. Yet effective analysis also depends on techniques and systems to gather, share and manage information.

Formulating a Strategy and Plan: Too often humanitarian actors are unable to articulate what they are trying to achieve, or how particular actions relate to precise goals. This impairs coordination and response. This study finds that strategies are most valuable when they are based on sound analysis and focus on tackling problems in an integrated way rather than in mandate sized pieces; when they focus on providing both humanitarian protection and assistance, and include the principles and standards that will inform that approach. They should also focus on specific, measurable targets and have benchmarks against which progress can be monitored. At their best, strategies emerge from processes that allow participants opportunities for joint analysis and reflection, which includes NGOs and actors outside the UN. To get the most from joint planning requires harmonising planning tools and cycles.

Standards: Given the absence or weakness of any government structure setting standards, humanitarians are left to delineate their own guide for action. Without agreed standards, this may vary radically from one situation to another. Conducting humanitarian activity in a stable, predictable manner is central to fostering respect for humanitarian principles and practice. Coordination teams have central roles to play in facilitating principled responses. Yet at the field level the team found little evidence of attempts to standardise the response among agencies, beyond their expressed commitment to the Sphere standards. While the study found examples where standards had been agreed, and even where compliance mechanisms had been established, overall the lack of system-wide agreement on what standards should be used and questions about who has sufficient power or legitimacy to assess compliance predominate in most settings.

Agreeing/Assigning Division of Labour and Allocating Resources: Coordinators can add value by orchestrating divisions of labour so that humanitarian response meets all the most urgent needs and not solely those that conform to agency mandates or mission statements. The division of labour is done well where Coordinators have sufficient legitimacy such that agencies will accept greater direction rather than suggestion, and agencies pool resources and allow the Coordinator to suggest matching of resources and needs. To address the gaps and duplications that exist among UN mandates and the skills of NGOs, funds should be put in the hands of the Coordinators – whether small funds to cover gaps, or more radically by establishing a common fund at country-level to receive all responses to the CAP from which the Coordinator allocates funds to respective agencies.

Advocacy: This was an area of weakness, although a valued activity. Advocacy was often described as an end in itself rather than as a set of influencing tactics as critical to operational response as a water tank or food parcel. The study found a number of examples where Coordinators and their teams had played critical roles in coordinating advocacy actions, facilitating others, or acting as a spokesperson with warring parties, governments, donors and the media to push them to uphold their responsibilities to respect humanitarian principles. These experiences highlighted that effective advocacy requires sound analysis of the problem, clear messages and proposals for action, the ability to seize all available opportunities, and readiness to press the difficult issues.

However, the study team was struck by the muteness of UN agencies towards donors – that is, an apparent unwillingness by the UN to criticise donor government policies. This study argues that humanitarian agencies, particularly the UN, must better manage the tension between relying on donors for funds, complying with their Executive Boards, and pressing donors and governments to uphold rights to assistance and protection.

Negotiating Access/Securing and Sustaining a Framework of Consent: Skilled and experienced people that negotiate access for the benefit of the UN and NGOs are highly valued by the humanitarian community. Clarity on principles and bottom lines among all those negotiating is also valuable to prevent belligerents playing agencies off against each other. Securing agreement among UN agencies on who has principal responsibility for negotiating access is also important if training and resources are to be correctly targeted. Experience suggests that negotiation is done well where negotiators have strong back up in terms of analysis and situation monitoring, and donors and governments provide additional leverage or undertake complementary diplomatic and political action.

Monitoring Strategy: There were strikingly few examples of monitoring the progress and impact of strategies from which to draw. Yet effective monitoring is essential in order to evaluate the positive and negative impact of humanitarian response, ensure that the response addresses changing circumstances, and to assist with context analysis and lesson learning. Where coordination teams record such information, they can act as an institutional memory function. This is particularly important when staff turnover is high and has proved useful for subsequent evaluations of the response. This highlights the value of resources being dedicated to the monitoring function.

5.2 Facilitating Collaboration – Tasks and Services

As Coordinators have to build consensus in order to be effective, experience suggests coordination is imbued with a strong element of *quid pro quo*. Past experiences suggest there is a range of tasks and services that Coordinators can provide to garner agencies' cooperation. These add value to individual agency responses, facilitate collaboration among agencies, and boost the profile of the coordination structures that offer them.

Security: Poorly coordinated security measures can corrode the trust and collaboration central to coordination as well as place lives in jeopardy. In the face of Member States' resistance to fund additional security measures, UN agencies, who have been pushing for stronger centralised resources, have been forced to both provide funds and second staff to UNSECOORD. The IASC Security Working Group has also focused on measures to improve inter-agency collaboration on security. This study's evidence suggests that coordination teams should include dedicated capability to focus on security plans, assessments and advisories and efforts to devise common strategies. A neglected element of such strategies appears to be emphasis on the importance of building relationships with local communities in order that they use whatever influence they have over armed groups who might threaten humanitarian action and actors. It is essential that the UN is clear to non-UN agencies about what protection and evacuation arrangements the UN system can provide.

Logistics coordination: Agencies or Coordinators that have been willing and able to put their services and capabilities at the service of others have made a huge difference to agencies' operations and been strongly appreciated. Agreed sets of procedures for joint logistics operations have also helped collaboration and coordination. Efforts to create an inter-agency capacity to establish UN Joint Logistics Centres at the onset of a large-scale emergency is an important development in this regard. Evidence suggested that **additional useful services** include providing common communication facilities, facilitating visas and laissez-passer, providing pigeonholes, meeting space, GIS/database and mapping services, NGO liaison, a front desk service, and guiding staff through induction services and training. Well-run meetings, as well as being the most obvious tool by which information is gathered and shared, are also useful for team building, problem solving and building networks.

Resource mobilisation: If decentralised funding decisions emerge as an enduring trend among donors, the value attached to coordination teams involved in field-level resource mobilisation could increase. On the basis of the evidence, resource mobilisation is done well where the Coordinator does not have responsibility for a particular agency's operations and where efforts are prepared jointly. The study argues that these efforts are likely to have greatest positive impact where they are directed at system-wide responses, or even common funds.