Information: There is universal consensus that information sharing is the *sine qua non* of coordination activity. The capacity to filter, analyse, synthesise and present information into digestible and easily used form is a valuable service. A common theme was the high value placed on information services that are provided in an equal way for the benefit of the entire humanitarian community rather than solely for the UN or NGOs. The study outlines valued products and processes, including maps, graphs and matrixes of who is doing what where, directories of contacts, translation of local press, and the often neglected factor of access to archive material such as past assessments.

Central to improving information gathering and provision is being clear on what information is needed for what purpose, and who has the responsibility for gathering it. Minimising the duplication in data gathering and maximising its accessibility to potential users is also crucial. (Sharing information is one of the foundations of coordination, but to gather information in the most efficient way requires coordination.) Another key challenge is to solve the problem of how to gather and disseminate politically sensitive information and analysis. All this highlights the importance of having sufficient staff who have specific information management skills. Agreeing guidelines for basic data collection and dissemination is an important element in making coordination more consistently effective.

5.3 Tools and Structures

Humanitarian Coordinators and their teams also have a number of tools and structures that they can utilise or with which they interact. Tools include the CAP and MoUs, while structures include coordination at sectoral and regional levels as well as the IASC.

The CAP: For most interviewees, despite the continuous efforts to improve the CAP, there is little uniformity in how it is done, what or whom it includes, and how it is used. For many it remains a funding-focused public relations exercise with little integrated planning or prioritisation that leaves the donors to cherry pick or even ignore it. Although globally the CAP provides one of the only tools that enables comparison of international responses to humanitarian need, at its worst preparing the CAP is more oriented to estimating likely donor response than a reliable assessment of humanitarian need. However, donors continue to express enthusiasm for the CAP and to find it useful in various ways.

Although it is far from producing system-wide integrated strategies and plans, by bringing people together the CAP has the potential to be an important opportunity to do this if effectively facilitated, supported and 'marketed' to agencies. This could underpin programming, security, impact assessment and inter-agency advocacy. As an effective funding tool, it is necessary for Coordinators to be given greater authority to facilitate and ultimately perform prioritisation.

Sectoral coordination: Although sectoral coordination it is likely to be made easier by a shared focus among all participants, the study revealed it is not immune to the difficulties encountered in coordination in general. It can impose burdens that outweigh its benefits when the number of coordination bodies proliferates. Allocating responsibility can also prove contentious, particularly when no agency has clear technical expertise or mandated responsibility. Both donors and agencies can resist the Coordinator's efforts to address this, suggesting that there needs to be more work at the central level to build in predictability on allocating responsibilities.

Experience suggests that sectoral coordination works well where sectoral level strategies are linked to fulfilling the overall response strategy, and if full-time Coordinators are appointed at the sectoral level that are technically competent and are prepared to 'shame and blame' others into upholding their undertakings. Field units that collect and disseminate information, advise on strategies, and act as focal points for debate have also been useful. It is also important that sectoral coordination does not preclude focus on cross-cutting issues such as human rights or protection.

Regional coordination: As one UN interviewee commented *'It is critical for the UN to get better at this given that the problems we address do not stay within borders.'* Regional structures have, on occasion, compensated for weak support from headquarters and have offered invaluable logistics or administrative support; on other occasions these structures have duplicated efforts. Many argued that regional coordination can be best achieved by country coordination structures establishing a flow of information and analysis between them. Interviewees' key complaint concerned confusion about how Coordinators and structures at the regional level relate to those at country-level. Clarity about respective roles and responsibilities, ensuring that these are complementary rather than duplicating, strong collaboration among Coordinators, and the provision of resources to enable coordination teams within a region to come together are all recommended if regional coordination is to be valuable.

MoUs counter the tendency to leave UN Country Teams to negotiate continually new relationships at field level, although there is debate about the precise level of detail that is helpful. Broad frameworks where specific interpretation of language can be interpreted in a particular context are most useful. For others, this left too much to interpretation.

The IASC is the mechanism through which field structures are put in place. Although participants cite improvements in the IASC over time, frustrations remain. Its broad membership is seen as its most important feature. As a focus for regular inter-agency interaction, it has fostered collaborative spirit. Yet within the IASC there is a preoccupation with inclusion. Furthermore, in a body that relies on consensus, decision-making is protracted and difficult issues get dodged. This is partly because all participants report to different boards, which causes weak buy-in and accountability. But it is not helped by having overloaded meeting agendas. As a result, much substantive work gets done in the corridors.

All of this has a direct bearing on decision-making over decisions about field coordination structures. Much of this debate appears to take place outside the IASC meetings and thus minimises the role of non-UN members. Furthermore, the process appears heavily oriented to accommodating the preferences and politics of the major UN operational agencies rather than solely focusing on the demands of the situation on the ground.

The weak links between staff in the field and those in headquarters also impinge on the IASC's decision-making and effectiveness. Doubts were expressed about the IASC's responsiveness to field-level coordination difficulties. Conversely, although Humanitarian Coordinators may be invited to attend the IASC when their countries are being discussed, in the field there appears to be little interest in the IASC. However, studies and interviewees alike perceived the potential of the IASC. The words of one UN interviewee sum this up well: *'OCHA has in its hand a fantastic tool. Why doesn't it use it? Why not try to make it the voice of the humanitarian community?'*

Thus for this study, the key areas for improvement are:

- More focus on the situation's demands in decision-making over the appointments of Coordinators.
- Better monitoring of coordination structures in the field.
- The instigation of more systematic consultation and communication processes through coordination teams on the ground.
- Strengthening IASC-wide advocacy.

5.4 Conclusion

It is notable that some of the tasks that are most valued are among the weakest aspects of current coordination. These are also the tasks that have proved critical to facilitating integrated responses to humanitarian need - such as analysis, strategy setting, establishing standards, divisions of labour, advocacy and negotiating access, and monitoring impact.

A repeated theme of this study is that the UN can improve coordination by devoting more energy to building skills and capacity to coordinate response in a more systematic and accountable way. Thus the tasks and services above should be part of a standard coordination package on offer to increase the impact of response. As complex emergencies by their definition preclude a one-size-fits-all policy, such packages should be a menu of possible options and arrangements on which the IASC should decide in accordance with the demands of the particular context and emergency.

SECTION 6: LIAISING WITH MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTORS

The study's ToR asked whether in different settings the relationship between humanitarian, political and military actors is coherent. The term coherence is variously used: its mildest interpretation argues for political, military and humanitarian action to be mutually reinforcing, its strongest that humanitarians should be subject to political goals. What emerged from this study was the tension between the emphasis on the strong interpretation from key players in the Secretariat, and the powerful examples from case studies of the importance for humanitarians to resist this; to guard their independence not as end in itself but as the cornerstone of practical strategies to attempt to sustain a framework of consent from belligerents. This was likely to involve demonstrating separation from political and military players on the ground.

As the Secretary-General's views have appeared to shift on whether humanitarian assistance should be insulated from, or integrated into, broader political frameworks, it is perhaps not surprising that some SRSGs have been accused of having interpreted coherence as a justification for them to gain political mileage from control of humanitarian assets. Yet this perverts the very definition of humanitarian action that seeks to confer no military or political advantage. It also threatens security: As one interviewee remarked, *'Wherever we are associated with political strategies, we increase our own risk.'* This highlights the risks of misguided enthusiasm for designating Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators as deputy to the SRSG.

Separation is not always necessary. The nature of the political and military strategies and how beneficiaries and belligerents see them is a key determinant for how humanitarians position themselves. Thus silence about the nature of the strategic goals for such coherent strategies is also part of the problem. In the wake of the Brahimi report, there is renewed pressure for all aspects of UN strategies to converge around peacebuilding, which is seen as unproblematic. Yet it should not be assumed that peacebuilding is inherently apolitical. It may mask unarticulated agendas and creates the possibility that humanitarian aid is simply coopted to meet political ends.

The coherence sought or required of UN humanitarians has a major significance for their relationship with other humanitarian actors, who are ready to distance themselves from the UN. Key players in the UN Secretariat are dismissive of any dilemma, arguing that UN agencies have different responsibilities from NGOs. However, the humanitarian label links all those who use it, and such coherence could have operational impacts beyond the UN humanitarian agencies.

This highlights the need for greater clarity from all sides on the respective roles of all players in order to be able to establish a clear division of labour and to delimit responsibilities among political, military and humanitarian actors. Advocacy, clear and limited points of contact to enable information flow, and clear locations and frameworks for planning multifaceted strategies are essential.

SECTION 7: OCHA'S ROLE

OCHA's invidious position of having a mandate for coordination that is undermined by a lack of authority and clout, resistance from UN agencies, and uncertain funding is a prime example of the structural obstacles to UN coordination.

Yet OCHA also undermines its frail credibility by fluctuating performance. Although providing dynamic, highly competent people to serve humanitarians has been at the heart of OCHA's success to date, all too many staff are slow to be deployed, given uncertain or no contracts, and poorly briefed. Staff turnover is high - a crippling failure for an organisation that depends on the calibre of its people. While the team were struck how UN agencies repeatedly seek to minimise OCHA's profile, OCHA also jeopardises success when it fails to consult or engage others effectively, or to give the impression that its interest in service is merely rhetorical device rather than an organisational commitment.

Setting aside the possibility of fundamental structural change, the study focuses on how OCHA can build its legitimacy and gain support by providing high quality coordination services. The study argues that OCHA should develop itself as a centre of excellence for coordination support functions at regional, country and sectoral levels. This depends on OCHA retaining and recruiting dynamic, highly competent and experienced people at the service of the humanitarian community. Thus OCHA should earn its profile by the reputation of its services for other humanitarians, and thus its impact on humanitarian response, rather than for its own sake. The study also concludes that excellence in access negotiations, political analysis and advocacy have been features of past successes and should be among OCHA's core strengths.

OCHA concedes that is has not yet fulfilled it potential advocacy role. This is particularly the case at headquarters. OCHA has a unique position as the humanitarian voice within the Secretariat. Its challenge is to both leverage its proximity to the Secretary-General's office to give it weight, while continually engaging in robust advocacy targeted at those within the Secretariat. The fact that key players in the Secretariat remain unclear about the dangers posed to humanitarian access and action by the requirements of 'coherence' signals the urgency for the ERC and OCHA to strategise with its sister UN agencies and other humanitarians about how to push this advocacy agenda. But evidence suggests that OCHA will have to work harder to convince others that it can be an effective humanitarian voice in the face of the political pressures that converge in the Secretariat.

While the onus is in part on OCHA to perform and persuade, the study team maintain that there must be pressure on agencies to respect OCHA's mandate from the Secretary-General and donors.

SECTION 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The Obstacles to Change

One of the underlying themes in this study as it presents the conclusions from past studies, interviews and case studies is that there is little new to say. The report sets out in some detail the picture that recurs over a decade of UN humanitarian agencies whose governance structures, funding sources, weak management and institutional cultures all constitute obstacles to effective coordination. It has also described the blight of adhocracy that remains in how the UN system coordinates. The repeated refrains of reviews and studies suggest that a pivotal problem confronting the system its inability to change. This is the result of resistance on the part of Member States and donors, and weaknesses internal to the system.

The evidence also reveals a 'system' that shows determined resistance to cede authority to anyone or any structure. Instead, all Coordinators have to work on the basis of coordination by consensus. In the face of the obstacles, this is an uphill struggle.

To eradicate some of these obstacles requires fundamental change. Yet despite the manifold obstacles to coordination, remarkably, humanitarian coordination does happen, although performance remains patchy. This study concludes that there is much that UN agencies can do to maximise the likelihood that humanitarian response is effectively coordinated, despite the structural obstacles and that it is incumbent upon them to do so.

This responsibility derives from the expectations of governments and humanitarian agencies of the UN's central and unique role to coordinate the humanitarian efforts of the international community. Yet this study has shown that there are others, in particular donors, who will fill the vacuum left by a UN system that fails to deliver in this coordinating role.

8.2 Options for Change

Given these conclusions, the options for improving coordination range from fundamental change to remove obstacles, to more incremental ones to increase the incentives to coordinate. It is important to reiterate that none of the options for change or recommendations are entirely new. Many of them echo recommendations of studies of coordination over more than a decade. This suggests that **the problem is not a dearth of recommendations** about how to improve coordination, **but lack of both management accountability for successes or failures and sufficient commitment to improving humanitarian response.**

1. **Fundamental structural reform of the UN's humanitarian operations**

    Given the accumulated evidence that consensus models are not strong enough to achieve effective coordination in the face of chronic systemic obstacles, the study believes that there is a strong case to be made for structural reform. Notwithstanding the recent debate around UN reform, the scale of the problem suggests this debate must be reopened if there is genuine commitment to strengthening the humanitarian response of the UN.

    The limited scope of this study prohibits systematic consideration of detailed recommendations. But it is clear that the challenge is to construct a body or structure with sufficient authority to be able to manage and guide humanitarian action – whether directly through a management line of one single humanitarian agency, or through a sufficiently powerful new structure that stands above existing funds and programmes to ensure prioritised and integrated responses. Such a structure should link with political actors to devise the political strategies necessary to address the causes of conflict and human suffering, as well as with development actors to ensure effective coordination between relief and development activity. Such a structure would also need to retain the elements currently fulfilled by diverse mandates; it should be both more efficient and responsive; and it should be able to relate effectively to humanitarian actors outside the UN.

In a world of conglomerating NGOs who are increasingly favoured by donors, and where there is greater momentum to integrate UN humanitarian operations into broader peacebuilding approaches, there are some who advocate that the debate should ask yet more fundamental questions about the comparative advantage of the UN. They raise questions about whether, instead of current levels of operational response, the UN should focus on 'core business' such as coordination, setting standards, upholding protection for refugees and IDPs, monitoring, and negotiating access.

2. **Change the funding for humanitarian coordination and increase Coordinators' authority on the ground**
In the interests of more systematic and effective coordination, and to avoid those with coordination responsibilities from competing with others, OCHA should be funded from assessed contributions. At field level, in place of funding particular agencies in response to the Consolidated Appeal, donors should contribute funds to a common fund in the hands of the Coordinator who should be vested with authority to prioritise and allocate funds to the strategy formulated by humanitarian agencies in the field.

3. **Strengthening the Current Decentralised System**
At the heart of change is the need for improved management, stronger accountability, and more systematic approaches to coordination.

The current reliance on Coordinators and their teams having to persuade others to coordinate must be buttressed by greater sanction attached to failing to coordinate. The commitment to coordination should be fostered by requiring all staff to focus on the system-wide response to beneficiaries' needs rather than solely on their agency's interests. At a minimum, all agencies must expect and instil greater discipline through conventional management lines so that personnel are assessed and rewarded on the basis of their participation and contribution to inter-agency coordination and coordinated outcomes.

All coordination structures and personnel should have clear guidance, reporting lines and defined relationships with all other key players. There needs to be greater efforts from the system to monitor coordination and to be quicker to resolve difficulties where they occur. Such difficulties should be the subject of evaluation and subsequent lessons to be learnt.

To maximise the ability of coordination teams to persuade others to coordinate, greater financial and management resources should be directed at the provision of coordination services and tools that clearly 'add value' to individual agency operations. This also requires greater leadership by high-calibre, experienced staff. OCHA has an important role to play in this.

8.3 The Pivotal Role of UN Member States and Donors

Effecting any of these options requires action from several quarters. To reiterate: **any change – whether that of enduring systemic change or maximising the effectiveness of the current system – requires changes in the behaviour of Member States and donors.**

Overall, if Member States and donors want better humanitarian coordination, they must be prepared to fund coordination costs and to place their expectations only where mandated responsibilities lie. Funding coordination from assessed contributions is a vital part of this, as is establishing a fund for the ERC to pay Humanitarian Coordinators.

Among the measures to maximise the effect of the current system, donors should support the development and agreement of indicators to assess coordination and its impact as well as the contribution of agencies to it as a criterion for funding. Performance appraisal systems that assess staff on the basis of their commitment to coordination in addition to the willingness of agencies to second competent staff could be among these indicators. Donors should apply greater pressure to UN humanitarian agencies and NGOs to support and respect the role of OCHA, as well as strengthen OCHA to work for the benefit of the humanitarian response rather than its own agency profile. Donors can strengthen their coordination within and among themselves and demonstrate more consistent support to coordination through their funding and their presence on the legislative bodies of organisations (whether the UNSC, UNGA, or Executive Boards).

As well as increasing levels of humanitarian aid to ensure impartial response to all those in need, donors should provide increased resources for efforts aimed at strengthening coordination such as monitoring, appraisal, assessment and shared training. Donors should also contribute to common funds, whether small additional funds for Humanitarian Coordinators to fill gaps in the response or, more radically, a fund to receive all contributions to the CAP. Both measures should be accompanied by donor support for the Coordinator to undertake prioritisation in place of donor earmarking.

8.4 The Role of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has a vital role in strengthening commitment to coordination and coordinated outcomes. He can lend the full weight of his authority to the ERC and insist that agencies recognise this. He can push for greater system-wide orientation. He can also encourage the heads of the operational agencies to second staff and establish rosters of those available, urge them to support the creation of common funds for management by the Coordinator – whether for filling gaps in response, or more radically, to receive all funds for the CAP – and require that they strengthen the requirement of their staff to contribute to coordinated outcomes by including this in performance appraisals.

The Secretary-General also has a critical role to play in reducing the adhocracy that currently blights coordination, for instance by ensuring the implementation of the Brahimi report's recommendations that SRSGs, Force Commanders, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators all have clear guidance, reporting lines and relationships with all other key players. (The reservations regarding other aspects of the report have been outlined above.)

Finally, the Secretary-General has important responsibilities to advocate that humanitarian action retains its independence from political and military strategies of the UN and Member States. For this to be effective, it requires clear points of contact and information exchange between political or humanitarian players. The Secretary-General must quash resistance to this in the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

8.5 Consolidated Recommendations to the ERC, OCHA and the IASC

The following recommendations combine those elaborated in the text with additional recommendations based on the study's conclusions. These are among the measures that should be well within the grasp of a UN system serious about the effective coordination of action to protect the rights of human beings to protection and assistance.

Recommendations to the ERC and OCHA

OCHA's Change Management Report presents a raft of recommendations to address some of OCHA's weaknesses. This report recommends the following priorities:

1. OCHA, in close discussion with IASC members, should draw together the lessons from this study as well as its current proposals for field coordination into a package of coordination services and tools, along with the prototype office structures and staff competencies associated with providing them. This can then be used as a menu of options on offer for all Coordinators. This should be presented to the IASC for agreement with an associated action plan, including a training programme, to ensure that OCHA can provide quality coordination services.
2. The ERC has a vital role to play in proactive monitoring of the conduct of coordination, particularly at the start of new emergencies, and reporting back to the IASC and to the Secretary-General. The ERC may need an enhanced monitoring and evaluation capacity that reports directly to him/her, using *inter alia*, indicators as recommended in A3 below.
3. OCHA should further strengthen the CAP as an inter-agency analysis and strategy-setting process, including working with UN Country Teams to provide analysis tools and facilitation for the process. The involvement in the analytical process of NGOs, the Red Cross Movement and UN political and military actors and analysts should be actively sought.
4. The ERC has a vital role to play in robust advocacy – both within the Secretariat and with UN Member States – on the principles, role and limits of humanitarian action, and the political action required to uphold the right to humanitarian assistance and protection. ECHA and ECPS are important fora for advocacy on the nature, challenges and limits to humanitarian action; the ERC can also press for action in the political, diplomatic and peacekeeping sphere. It will be important to strategise with other humanitarians about how to push this advocacy agenda. The IASC – given its broad membership – is the obvious forum for such strategising.

Recommendations to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

It is recommended that the IASC review the findings of this study and formulate an action plan for follow up. Among the measures that should be included are the following:

A. Appraisal

1. The UN members of the IASC should review and revise existing performance appraisal schemes for all staff. These should include criteria to measure demonstrated contribution to inter-agency coordination and coordinated outcomes. Particular incentives should be attached to secondments to inter-agency efforts.
2. The UN members of the IASC should establish an inter-agency working group to compare and harmonise performance appraisal schemes and the rewards and sanctions associated with contributing to coordination or thwarting it.
3. The IASC should agree performance appraisal criteria and a regular appraisal process for Humanitarian Coordinators. This should include indicators for behaviour or action that would trigger a process of review leading to removal from the position.
4. The IASC should work with donors to identify indicators of coordination and coordinated outcomes as the basis for funding decisions. Performance appraisal systems that assess staff on the basis of their commitment to coordination, and the willingness of agencies to second competent staff, should be among these indicators.

B. Recruitment of Coordination Staff

1. The IASC should intensify its efforts to work with the UNDG and OCHA to agree the competencies and selection processes for Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators. This should include agreement of where skills for Humanitarian Coordinators might differ from or clash with those expected of Resident Coordinators.
2. All IASC member agencies should intensify efforts to establish an inter-agency roster of coordination staff that indicates staff skills and availability. They should do this by undertaking a thorough process of identifying individuals with aptitude for coordination positions – whether as Humanitarian Coordinators or support staff – including those with potential but who may require training.
3. The IASC should explore with non-UN members the potential for extended secondments of NGO personnel as Coordinators and support staff. This would require the agreement of potential training needs necessary for non-UN staff to work for the UN.

C. Induction Processes

1. The IASC should form an inter-agency working group on induction processes to compare current guidance and information provided to new staff. On the basis of this review, this group should develop a series of training materials and processes for generic guidance to help staff anticipate and overcome challenges. This would be provided to all staff going to the field, or as refresher courses for existing staff. Such materials should include information on mandates, activities and competencies of all IASC members, humanitarian principles, Sphere standards, impact indicators, and security, as agreed by the IASC. This could form a common UN humanitarian handbook.
2. The IASC should agree that one of the aspects of the coordination package provided by OCHA should include providing induction guidance tailored to the specific context to offer as a service to incoming staff of all humanitarian agencies. This could also have an additional benefit of encouraging staff to deepen their understanding and their political, economic and social analysis that is essential to effective humanitarian response.
3. All IASC members should commit to making handovers between staff more systematic by including them in all job descriptions as a requirement of all departing staff. At headquarters, management should be improved to increase the number of handovers that take place.

D. Monitoring

1. The IASC should agree a process to evaluate field coordination at regular intervals in order to increase both its responsiveness and ability to resolve problems. This could include a) regular reporting against agreed benchmarks to the IASC by IASC members in the field, and b) a process of small inter-agency teams travelling to the field to carry out agreed systematic assessments before reporting back to the IASC.

2. An assessment of the contribution of agencies to coordination and coordinated outcomes should be part of the process of the mid-term CAP review. This could include agency self-assessment against agreed criteria, potentially backed up by independent evaluation.

E. Reporting Lines and Accountability

1. The IASC should agree the relationship, reporting lines and accountability of all those involved in coordination, in particular between the head of the OCHA field coordination unit and the Humanitarian Coordinator.
2. The IASC should agree who will deputise for the Humanitarian Coordinator in all instances, including a protocol for further contingency arrangements should it be necessary to further deputise for the deputy. This should exclude those with responsibilities for operational programmes where there are alternatives. This makes a strong case for the head of OCHA offices being appointed as the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator.

F. Country and Regional Structures

1. IASC members should agree to replicate the IASC at the field level in all instances.
2. IASC members should adopt the same designations of what constitutes a region as a first step to facilitate regional coordination, and should work towards having any regional structures co-located with those of other agencies.
3. IASC members should instigate more systematic consultation and communication with coordination teams in the field.

G. Advocacy

1. The IASC should form an advocacy working group to agree a broad framework for advocacy strategies towards UN Member States, donors, belligerent groups, and other parts of the UN including DPA, DPKO and the Office of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, at headquarters, country and local level. This would include responsibilities for the ERC and IASC members at headquarters and in the field. It is vital that UN agencies continue robust advocacy with donors on their obligations to respect the humanitarian principles of universality and impartiality.
2. All IASC members should collaborate with OCHA in pressing UN Member States to fund coordination – both OCHA and Humanitarian Coordinators – from assessed contributions.

H. Systemisation

1. The IASC should agree a package of coordination services and likely accompanying structures to be prepared by OCHA as the basis for coordination structures in country as standard operating procedure for OCHA. This should include agreement on the potential value of OCHA having a presence in the field at sub-office level to provide effective coordination support.
2. The IASC should make clear specifications on these coordination structures, the required competencies and the reporting relationships as part of all decisions on coordination options considered by the UN and the rest of the IASC.
3. The IASC should agree a matrix of MoUs to be negotiated to complement existing MoUs.

I. On the CAP, all IASC members should work with OCHA to:

1. Strengthen the CAP as a valuable opportunity for inter-agency analysis and strategy setting, including both operational response and advocacy strategies.
2. Require Coordinators to actively seek the involvement of NGOs and the Red Cross Movement in the analysis process, if not the fundraising strategy.
3. Improve the accuracy and transparency of the CAP's assessment of target beneficiaries to increase its use as an advocacy tool. This will help in assessing and comparing international responses to humanitarian need.
4. Give a stronger remit to Coordinators to facilitate prioritised, integrated strategies to respond to humanitarian need.
5. Under effective and accountable Coordinators in an improved system of coordination, donors should be required to place their responses to Consolidated Appeals in a single country fund – rather than funding individual agency activities – in the hands of a Coordinator.

1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

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 a study on humanitarian coordination in order to sharpen thinking on UN humanitarian coordination in the light of a number of inter-related processes underway in the UN. These include:

- The continuing debate on the criteria to be applied in selecting one or other of the three 'models' of humanitarian coordination – 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'. (The request made in mid-2000 to the Secretary-General by the then Permanent Representative of the US to the UN to employ the lead agency model more often reinvigorated the debate.)
- The report of the UN Panel on Peace Operations, referred to as the Brahimi report.[7]
- OCHA's Change Management process instigated to strengthen OCHA's ability to deliver on its mandate.
- Work within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the UN Secretariat to clarify relationships and responsibilities on internally displaced people (IDPs), disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), and between Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), Humanitarian Coordinators and Resident Coordinators.

1.2 Objectives and Scope of the Study

The terms of reference (ToR) state that the purpose of the study is to assist the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the IASC *'to draw lessons from recent experiences in humanitarian coordination, with a view to better understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each coordination model in particular circumstances, leading to a clearer definition of criteria for choosing the most appropriate coordination arrangements in any given situation'* (see Annexe 1).

The study is also required to identify *'features of coordination arrangements which were seen, by those involved, to have provided "added value", as well as those which were felt not to have contributed to the effective coordination of the overall humanitarian operation.'*

The terms further specified the need for the study to consider the following questions:

- Is the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) perceived as an aid to effective coordination?
- Is the relationship between humanitarian, development and political/military actors seen to be coherent and mutually reinforcing?
- Is access a problem? If so, do humanitarian actors believe that current coordination arrangements ensure that the problem is being addressed as effectively as possible?
- Do all the actors feel that they have the information they need to coordinate their operations effectively with each other? How do they believe that information sharing and information management could be improved?
- Is sectoral coordination perceived to be working well?
- Has there been any attempt to introduce strategic monitoring of the humanitarian programme?
- Is the coordination model in place perceived to be appropriate by humanitarian actors?

The study team interpreted this as a task to:

i   identify what worked where, when, why and how, in order to
ii   identify the lessons for selecting humanitarian coordination arrangements in the future, based on reflections and analysis of different settings and experience.

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

A number of interviewees were concerned that the study's ToR neglected consideration of humanitarian coordination in natural disasters. Some challenged the rationale offered in the ToR that 'coordination arrangements in countries afflicted by natural disasters are well established...and not seen to be in need of review' Others added that excluding natural disasters from the focus perpetuated the division that has occurred, not least within OCHA, between those working in and on natural disasters as opposed to complex emergencies.

The study's focus was the UN and coordination of, and by, the humanitarian agencies of the UN system. Yet UN agencies do not work in a vacuum but interact with host governments and authorities, local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross Movement, governments, donor agencies and the military. In many settings, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement are major implementers of humanitarian response on the ground, with international NGOs (INGOs) sometimes acting as implementing partners of UN agencies. The experiences of all these actors – whether as coordinators or those being coordinated – were included in the study.

1.3 Methodology

This is an independent study. It was carried out by a Research Fellow and Research Associate of the ODI in London. The findings are based on three sets of sources:

i   A review of literature on humanitarian coordination. This focused on studies of humanitarian coordination arrangements and experiences in specific country settings across the world over the last 10 years, as well as relevant UN documents (see attached bibliography).

ii   Interviews with more than 250 people including past and present Humanitarian Coordinators, staff of UN agencies, staff in the UN Secretariat, donor governments, other UN Member States, the Red Cross movement, NGOs, and the military (see attached list of interviewees).

iii   Three case studies to examine in greater detail ongoing humanitarian operations. The case studies were the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Kosovo. They were selected on the basis that they offered different coordination models in different continental settings at different stages of crisis and posed different challenges. The case studies each involved a week-long field trip to interview UN agencies, NGOs, agencies from the Red Cross Movement, donors and local authorities (see Annexes).

There were three major constraints encountered by the study team:

i   It was a challenge to address the broad scope of the study and do justice to the wealth of material gathered in the time available. The literature review was conducted at speed. The three field trips provided fascinating snapshots of the challenges of different country contexts but precluded detailed analysis of coordination over time. A case study on East Timor was envisaged but proved impossible. The literature review, along with the case studies and interviews, generated a huge amount of source material.

ii   The absence of any consistently used indicators to assess what constitutes successful coordination. This study has relied on interviewees' perceptions and past studies' conclusions of what has made a difference to humanitarian response. Agreeing indicators for coordination is an area that requires further study. This is essential if coordination is to be better monitored and evaluated.

iii   A number of staff members of both OCHA in Geneva and UN agencies expressed concern that they had not been consulted on the study and its ToR prior to the study team being contracted and/or embarking on the work in October 2000. As a result they were unclear about OCHA's intentions in commissioning the study and expressed disquiet that they were expected to cooperate with a study about which they had not been effectively consulted. As a result the study was delayed while OCHA consulted with five focal points in UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and DPA and revised the ToR. The team commenced work again on 13 November 2000. In spite of this difficult beginning, the team was grateful that all IASC members collaborated fully in the study.

1.4 Structure

In **Section 2**, the report sets the context. It takes a brief look at the history of the UN's efforts to strengthen humanitarian coordination. It sets out the parameters of the coordination debate within the UN. The chapter concludes by touching on some of the challenges of the changing context that humanitarians and coordinators now face.

Section 3 presents lessons from recent coordination experience, highlighting some of the recurring obstacles to humanitarian coordination and the ways in which these obstacles are overcome.

In **Section 4**, the report presents its findings on the advantages and disadvantages of the UN's models for humanitarian coordination.

Section 5 identifies tasks, services and tools of coordination that have added value to the work of those involved in humanitarian response, and the accompanying challenges to provide them. The section also discusses some of the less successful aspects of humanitarian coordination that require reform.

Section 6 presents conclusions to the question whether the relationship between humanitarian, development, political and military actors was seen to be coherent and mutually reinforcing, and touches on some of the implications of the Brahimi report.

Section 7 draws together findings and recommendations about OCHA's role.

Section 8 sets out recommendations to improve coordination.

Annexes include the ToR, a matrix of current coordination arrangements, short reports on each of the three case studies and a list of interviewees. Finally there is a selected bibliography.