

Reporting by Session Note-takers at the 2019 Annual Consultations with NGOs

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Session Title:	Information for risk analysis, early warning and preparedness
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Major points arising from speakers and discussions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This session aims at addressing the need of a coordinated approach to data related to early warning and preparedness for displacement emergencies, and ultimately to provide actionable recommendation to improve response and impact. It is linked to the GCR and the GRF which promotes coordination and cooperation among multiple partners to enhance the risk analysis, early warning and emergency preparedness solutions. • ACAPS presented their Global humanitarian analysis platform CrisisInSight which captures developments for sudden-onset disasters and protracted crises to better inform the humanitarian response and ensure evidence-based decision making. ACAPS works with a list of partners, including H2H, Start Network, IOM, Infrom (Index for risk management, REACH, Map Action and cartong). CrisisInSight analyses the severity of situations (through a global crisis severity index), as well as humanitarian access, to inform preparedness measures and conduct trends analysis. It features a monthly reporting on the global crisis severity index and quarterly reporting on risk analysis. • Worldvision presented its own platform, a predictive tool which scans the horizon, based on 10 categories/sectors indicators (conflict, destabilizing events, displacement, economic security, environment, education, food security, health, nutrition and political security). The overall goal of the platform is to monitor the situation adjust programming and ensure that early preparedness measures and actions are taken accordingly. The outcome is a regional monthly early warning report. The sectorial indicators in the early warning report include the following levels: low alert, moderate, emergency and crisis, and are colour coded. • HelpAge International presented its emergency preparedness information management system, the ALERT platform, which is funded by DFID and designed as a task manager. HelpAge works with a consortium which include Care, Concern Worldwide, Coventry University, Handicap International, Islamic Relief and Oxfam. ALERT allows to track risk monitoring, preparedness actions and contingency planning as well as tracking all activities in country operations. Inputs from other platforms such as Worldview or CrisisInSight can be used in the risk monitoring module, while trends in a particular sector and indicators can be monitored. • IDMC presented its displacement monitoring platform, IDETECT, which analyses information from a wide range of sources including media, hazard monitoring, conflict events, social media, etc. The IDMC's IDETECT uses artificial intelligence to bolster the collection and verification of data. The interface is customizable and allows to produce analysis, and allows for triangulation of information and comparison of various reports. • The issue of interoperability of these systems was raised. However, it was underlined that they do not all fit the same purpose: some of these work on information management and analysis for early warning purposes while others are tools used to monitor operations or preparedness measures. Joint analysis and data-sharing is thus difficult. 	

- The session then broke in **4 different thematic group discussions** focusing on a number of key issues that have been jointly identified by NGOs and UNHCR. Below are the key takeaways from these discussions.

Group discussion 1 - NGO pledges, contributions and good practices to share at the GRF:

- The group discussed the ‘Act Alliance Online Platform for Preparedness Planning’, a tool used by 20 Act Alliance members in Myanmar to share information and plans. Instead of each organization having its own preparedness plan, the Act Alliance Online Platform enables organizations to fill in the information online, therefore creates a joint preparedness plan and facilitates effective coordination. Act Alliance has around 150 members worldwide, and the online platform was introduced globally as country-based systems. Currently, the online platform is only in use in Myanmar and will possibly rollout in Nepal and Uganda. A challenge for the Act Alliance Online Platform is to ensure organizations’ active participation. Some organizations might not regard using the online platform as a priority. Meanwhile, the platform is accessible exclusively to Act Alliance members and does not engage with the government.
- The group also discussed a mobile application designed by Boston University that disseminates cross-sectoral information for risk analysis, and is currently being piloted in Istanbul, Turkey. The information is easily accessible and the Turkish government is also engaged.
- Overall, in accordance with the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, an information sharing platform needs to be open to everyone, easily accessible and actively engage with the local government to better respond to the government’s needs.
- Closer cooperation in information sharing among stakeholders could be fostered through inclusion of all stakeholders (from refugees and displacement affected people to governments and international organisations), incentivization, and partnerships. There is indeed a need to ensure there is an incentive to contribute, allowing to reach as many people as possible.

Group discussion 2 - Getting from early warning to early action: identifying key challenges and solutions:

- The group agreed that there is a need to involve local communities in the early warning process, and to build local capacities to develop their own solutions. They could be supported in developing their own standard operating procedures on data collection methods and training in this regard. Additionally, mapping of actors, capacities, resources and service providers is required. Furthermore, we should focus on exploring and addressing the root causes of displacement and migration.

Group discussion 3: Information sharing and interoperability of systems: challenges and ways forward

- The group highlighted the main obstacles to data sharing:
 - Technical issues (we don’t use all the same data analysis models)
 - Peer review (not all data need to be shared however and this should be more easily resolved)
 - Organizational will (information is power and organizations want to hold onto this power, especially if it highlights gaps and structural issues)
 - Political sensitivity.

- Other challenges:
 - Risk/data protection process
 - Control on sharing data to 3rd parties
 - Strategic use of the information (all contexts)
 - Lack of data knowledge (incomplete data)
 - Different data collection methods and processes which may not necessary be aligned with those of other organizations
- In view of the aforementioned challenges, and the high level of competition amongst agencies, there is a need to establish and implement a neutral, independent entity (comprised of different heads of agencies, etc.) to whom different organizations' data can be shared. However this requires that agencies be willing to share data with this entity, which might represent a challenge in itself.

Group discussion 4- Subject Real time data and models for early actions: media and social media monitoring tools, key indicators for risk monitoring & early warning of internal and cross-border displacement (social, political, climate and sudden and slow-onset disaster factors):

- For advocacy purposes, there is a need for reliable, accurate and precise information in real time. For example, information gathered through remote sensing data or data imagery is reliable and can be gathered in real time. On the other hand, information sourced on social media can also be useful, as events are often reported almost immediately after the fact. However, it is difficult to verify that information, and there is a tradeoff between speed and validity/accuracy on information and real-time data. Participants highlighted the need for real time information, underlining at the same time that it has to be confirmed and accurate, which is often compromised. They also highlighted that there is a need to bring human and qualitative information as new sources of data (for example, individual testimonies of newly arrived refugees and displaced people).

Recommendations/Conclusions/Decisions on the way forward

Group discussion 1 - NGO pledges, contributions and good practices to share at the GRF:

- Information sharing platforms should be open to everyone, accessible and involve the local government to better respond to the government's needs. Actors are thus encouraged to involve the relevant governments / authorities in the development of such information management projects.
- Closer cooperation on information sharing among stakeholders is required, and could be promoted through inclusion all stakeholders (from refugees and displacement-affected people to governments and international organisations), incentivization, and partnerships.

Group discussion 2 - Getting from early warning to early action: identifying key challenges and solutions:

- There is a need to involve local communities in the early warning process, and to build local capacities to develop their own solutions. We could support them in developing their own standard operating procedures on data collection methods and training in this regard. Additionally, mapping of actors, capacities, resources and service providers is required. Furthermore, there is need to explore ways of addressing the root causes of displacement and migration.

Group discussion 3: Information sharing and interoperability of systems: challenges and ways forward

- There is a recommendation for resources to establish and implement a neutral, independent entity (comprised of different heads of agencies, etc.) to whom different organizations' data can be shared. The competition remains and will remain high between different agencies and a neutral entity would be ideal. This however implies the willingness of agencies to share data with this entity, which constitutes a separate challenge in itself.

Group discussion 4- Subject Real time data and models for early actions: media and social media monitoring tools, key indicators for risk monitoring & early warning of internal and cross-border displacement (social, political, climate and sudden and slow-onset disaster factors):

- There is a need for real time information though this has to be confirmed and accurate, which is often compromised. There is also a need to bring human and qualitative information as new sources of data (for example, individual testimonies of arriving refugees and displaced people)

Top two quotes from the session:

- On different methods of risk analysis: "It is interesting to explore the process, especially when it comes to innovation. The process is even more important than the technology... New technologies are probably not enough. But it is especially useful when they are combined with substantive expertise, and that is why it is important to empower the analysts".
- On real time data for early action: "There is a tradeoff between speed and validity/accuracy on information and real-time data."

Any general points regarding UNHCR-NGO partnerships

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