



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION



Draft Letter to the New Emergency Relief Coordination (ERC)

Draft of August 9, 2024

Background

This draft letter is based on the outcomes of a broad survey, discussions among members of ICVA and the CHS Alliance, and a workshop hosted by both networks in June 2024 in Bangkok (“Our Participation Revolution Needs a Rethink: Proposing a Pathway to Change – Rethinking local to global collaboration for a more accountable and equitable system for people in crisis”).

The aim is to share the draft letter with the memberships of both networks and workshop participants for comments. The final letter is to be sent to the incoming Emergency Relief Coordinator/UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in September 2024.

INSERT ANY DETAILS ABOUT BY WHEN/TO WHOM COMMENTS SHOULD BE SENT

Draft Letter

Ms/Mr./Dr. **XXX**
Emergency Relief Coordinator
UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
New York

XX September 2024

Re: Creating a More Accountable and Equitable System for People in Crisis Under your Leadership

Dear Ms/Mr./Dr. **XXX**,

As members of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the CHS Alliance **[and possibly others]**, we would like to warmly congratulate you on your recent appointment. We look forward to working closely with you in your new role.

At the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) – humanitarian actors (including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals), donors, and States committed to truly put people affected by crises at the centre of humanitarian responses and to be accountable to them.

We have seen significant progress towards fulfilling these commitments through various commitments and initiatives. Yet, many of the humanitarian sector’s approaches are too “siloed” and, at times, have created unhelpful divisions, duplication, and even confusion. We are still not collectively achieving our broader goals and commitments to people affected by crisis, which means we are collectively failing them.

At a time when humanitarian needs are growing, there is an urgent need to rethink local to global collaboration to create a more accountable and equitable system for people in crisis. Under your leadership, and with the ongoing IASC restructuring of task forces, we see an opportunity to change the focus of the humanitarian ‘system.’ We need to work with those outside of the ‘system’ so that people affected by crisis have their

agency, rights, and dignity respected and their diverse needs met – because communities are not homogenous. We need to truly shift power to people affected by crisis so that they can hold humanitarian actors to account.

We believe a longer-term, 10-15-year vision can help focus our collective efforts to bring about change:

We need to work towards a longer-term vision that:

- *Centres on affected people's agency, rights, and dignity, including by recognising their priorities, capacities, and ownership.*
- *Empowers and supports people affected by crisis via an ecosystem of humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors, including development and human rights actors, States, and non-State actors.*
- *Ensures collective accountability to implement commitments, including the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles (GHD), the Grand Bargain, and IASC commitments, with consequences for non-implementation.*
- *Measures the real impact of aid on people's lives and uses this evidence to adapt and to shift power to those most able to support people affected by crisis, including people themselves.*

Your leadership will be critical to achieving this vision for a more accountable and equitable system for people in crisis. We would suggest the following initial steps:

- 1) Take on the role of 'IASC Champion for Affected People' as an explicit priority for your leadership, and work to ensure that people affected by crisis – not organisations – are at the centre of all IASC, Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and cluster discussions.
- 2) Ensure that existing and future IASC structures and HCTs have the explicit overarching goal of delivering humanitarian aid that meets people's diverse needs and respects their agency, dignity, and capacities.
 - Consider ways to bring the voices of people affected by crisis into these forums so that their perspectives are heard.
 - Move towards equal representation of local/national humanitarian actors in HCTs, with funding to support their engagement, ensuring that the *Principles of Partnership* are put into practice.
- 3) Develop and roll-out ERC-Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) Compacts that explicitly include accountability to people affected by crisis as part of the HC performance management cycle, within the overall framework of the Resident Coordinator/HC/Development Coordination Office Performance Appraisal System.
- 4) Convene (annually) a high-level dialogue for representatives of people affected by crisis and national and local community-based and faith-based actors with IASC Principals, donors, and development actors to find ways to put this vision into practice.
 - Find incentives and ways to ensure greater accountability of humanitarian actors to people affected by crisis.
 - Identify approaches that ensure more sustainable partnerships between humanitarian actors, which respect the *Principles of Partnership*.
- 5) Commit OCHA and the IASC to better monitoring the real-world impact of humanitarian responses on meeting people's diverse needs and priorities.

We hope that you, the IASC, and others will join us in working towards this longer-term vision. We recognise that achieving the vision will not be easy. It will require concerted efforts to change mindsets, the ways organisations operate, and our ways of working in the humanitarian sector. The necessary changes will, at times, be difficult and it will require some to relinquish power, but those changes will help us to collectively better implement commitments to people and communities affected by crisis.

We stand ready to work with you, the IASC, States, donors, and others to agree a collective vision and identify ways forward. Together, we must create a more accountable and equitable system that ensures humanitarian responses deliver what people affected by crisis truly need.

We look forward to discussing these ideas further with you.

Yours sincerely,

XXX

Cc: *IASC Principals*