



GRAND BARGAIN ANNUAL MEETING 2024 SUMMARY NOTE

The 2024 Grand Bargain (GB) Annual Meeting took place at the ICRC Humanitarium in Geneva on 16-17 October 2024. 192 participants, including donors, UN Agencies, I/NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and local actors came together at Principals and Sherpa levels to discuss progress and challenges in the implementation of the GB3.0 Framework, share good practices, and agree on an Implementation Agenda until 2026.

Key Take Aways:

1. Agreement on a GB 3.0 Implementation Agenda until 2026, which also captures the outcomes of the sessions identified in this Summary Note.
2. Call to action: urgency for all GB Signatories to translate the Implementation Agenda into concrete actions, in line with **Annex 1** to this note by (a) defining plans and communicating them across their organisations, including Embassies, Permanent Missions, Regional and Country Offices; (b) engaging with different GB constituencies at all levels, including through National Reference Groups (NRGs), to replicate and scale good practices; and (c) translating them into their partnership agreements.
3. The GB Ambassadors will continue reaching out to GB Signatories throughout 2025 to evaluate progress against the Implementation Agenda and explore opportunities to address strategic enablers to address current trends as identified by the Principals.

Principals' Segment (Day 1)

ICRC Director-General Pierre Krähenbühl and GB Ambassador Jemilah Mahmood opened the meeting, welcoming Signatories to the GB Annual Meeting 2024. They extended a special welcome to the representatives from Qatar Charity – an aspirant to join the GB - and members of GB National Reference Groups from Kenya, Myanmar, Indonesia, Yemen and Türkiye as special guests.

In the opening remarks, the ICRC DG reflected on the current global environment that confronted the humanitarian system: conflicts were proliferating, divisions at global level becoming more acute, polarisation reaching new levels. He called on Signatories to build bridges to overcome divisions and work together to find solutions.

Ambassador Mahmood emphasised that as humanitarian needs grow increasingly severe and intense, and contexts for humanitarian assistance become dangerous, the available funding for humanitarian action was limited - and in some cases, even decreasing. As a result, the humanitarian actors are compelled to focus resources on providing a response to the most vulnerable in crises and emergencies. Meanwhile, addressing more long-term needs risked being deprioritised and development funding is inadequately reaching fragile and conflict-affected areas. There is a strong expectation for a high-quality humanitarian response, and for greater efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time, there is an increase in requirements such as on reporting and visibility – leading to greater administrative costs – as well as conditionalities on how humanitarian funding should be used. She recalled the Principals' affirmation of the GB and its commitments, as expressed during the Ambassadors' engagement with

the Principals throughout the summer. She also flagged the growing frustration over the slow pace of change in key areas and concerns about backsliding on progress achieved since 2016.

Illustrating how these trends play out in an ongoing crisis, Nadine Saba, Director of the local organisation Akkar Network for Development in Lebanon, shared her perspectives of the response in Lebanon, vividly portraying the realities of working amid conflict. She called on the GB Principals to fulfil their responsibilities to translate the GB commitments into action in response to crises, such as in Lebanon. She urged them to resist reverting to old habits, in light of an emergency.

The Ambassador also called for greater ambition in advancing the commitments in the next two years, leading up to the 10-year anniversary of the GB in 2026. During the subsequent discussion, Principals highlighted the importance to boost the implementation of commitments; shared key priorities and made proposals on how the platform and the GB spirit could be used to advance those, and to find solutions for new/current trends together.

Localisation and changes in approaching partnerships was a recurring theme, where Principals reported progress. Yet, they also acknowledged the need to translate policies into practice, the importance of improving the tracking of funding flows, and having stronger measures in place for defining success. A proposal was made to more strongly include Local and National Actors (LNAs) in appraisals and assessing the organisation's progress on localisation, as well as promoting inclusive approaches and targeted investments in Women-led Organisations (WLOs) as one way of making the **GB more gender transformative**. The need to unlock domestic funding, shift power, as well as the consideration to step back to make space for LNAs were mentioned.

With respect to **Quality Funding**, while some Signatories were able to provide and access flexible, multi-year funding, this was not at the expected levels and not sufficient to respond to current trends. The *quid pro quo* needed to come back. Some of the donors highlighted that lack of transparency in funding flows continued to be a barrier to increase quality funding. There was also a conversation on how signatories could support and incentivise each other to improve quality funding.

While there were improvements in the **participation of LNAs in decision-making fora**, this GB priority continued to progress slowly. It was highlighted that participation was not just about having a seat at the table but having the ability and power to influence decisions. Further, **accountability to affected people**, including them in decision-making, and responding to feedback was progressing too slowly.

During the discussion, there was a strong emphasis on the need to advance the **nexus and sustainable programming**, going beyond the traditional humanitarian-development-peace framework to include climate emergencies as well. Principals highlighted the importance of humanitarians working closely with International Financial Institutions, governments, in partnership with Local and national Actors, and other relevant stakeholders to operationalise the nexus effectively.

There was also wide recognition of the potential of **anticipatory action** to reduce pressure on humanitarian funding streams if done at scale; to be more inclusive and expand the reach of the GB beyond existing donors including on **innovative financing**; and to progress on **risk sharing** as an enabler of more equitable partnerships.

The need to have open and honest conversations between multiple stakeholders and the importance of building trust between them and the public reverberated throughout the discussions. This prompted Principals to reflect on the **current narrative of humanitarian action**; its limits to create traction among public, parliamentarians, media; and the need to address mis/dis-information. The GB platform could be used to continue this conversation and *to make the case* for humanitarian action.

Further, several Principals stated how **compliance requirements** and increasing **donor conditionalities** strained already limited resources and prevented local actors from engaging in

partnerships. While some reporting and compliance was necessary, there was a need for recalibration to find the right balance and jointly discuss 'what made sense'.

In his closing of the session, Ambassador Koehler identified some areas of convergence among the Principals: a sharpened focus on specific GB priorities; a need to accelerate the nexus approach; the relevance of assessing the current humanitarian narrative and strengthen advocacy; a need to collectively discuss priority setting and aid conditionalities. He urged Principals to ambitiously pursue the implementation of their commitments, discuss them within their organisations at all levels, continue integrating these commitments into Signatories' way-of-working, and align their organisations with GB commitments. Echoing these sentiments, Ambassador Bessler underscored the importance of achieving tangible impact in crises contexts where humanitarian assistance is provided. Both Ambassadors affirmed to take the Principals' conversation forward in the Sherpa Segment of the Annual Meeting.

Discussion outcome:

- Reaffirmation of the importance of the GB and of boosting the implementation of its commitments.
- Acknowledgement of the need to leverage the uniqueness of the GB platform to further discuss the humanitarian narrative, reducing conditionalities, and priority-setting of humanitarian action.

Sherpas' Segment (Day 2)

This Segment of the Annual Meeting builds on the Principals' Segment and identifies concrete actions to implement the GB 3.0 framework in the next two years, including scaling good practices. In their opening, GB Ambassadors Bessler and Koehler reported on the key take aways from the Principals' Segment, emphasised the uniqueness of the GB platform and its inclusivity, and the potential to leverage the platform to reach transformative change.

The state of the Grand Bargain: achievements, opportunities for progress and perspective from country contexts

IFRC moderated a discussion on the status of the GB, with updates of the self-reports, the implementation of the GB Caucus outcomes, and the perspectives from National Reference Groups (NRGs).

The GB Secretariat presented the highlights of the 2024 GB self-report cycle. **Quality funding:** There is more multiyear funding in the system, but it remains challenging to track this from donors to local and national actors (LNAs). While 'flexible arrangements' are largely in place to adapt to unforeseen developments, there is only limited progress on unearmarked and softly earmarked funding. **Localisation:** Many Signatories are changing their localisation policies, suggesting that 'localisation' is becoming the new norm. Four donors and 15 aid organisations reported a 25% funding of LNA's as directly as possible in line with the GB commitment. Donors continued to mainly rely on at least one intermediary to fund LNAs. Overall, tracking of funding to LNA's, including for Women-led Organisations (WLOs) remained challenging, but several Signatories are working on improving their internal tracking and reporting systems. Almost 90% of Signatories reported to be able to cover overhead costs for LNAs, but more work is required to ensure that this is done systematically. Further, many Signatories have policies for equitable partnerships in place and the participation of LNAs in decision-making fora is increasing. Yet, more needs to be done to ensure 'meaningful' participation of LNAs. **Engagement with affected people:** the great majority of Signatories reported to incentivise

partners and apply policies for stronger engagement with affected people, including responding to feedback from affected people. Several Signatories considered the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) to be an important instrument. Yet, there is insufficient information on the quality of the engagement. More Signatories have reported that they think about **risk** differently within their partnerships, however it is unclear how the risk-sharing framework is being applied. Finally, there was a high level of endorsement of the **Caucuses outcomes**, but implementation and follow-up remain uneven. Signatories were encouraged to consult the [submitted self-report data](#) for further level of detail, including per Signatory, as well as to consult the visual presentation.

During the session, Signatories participated in a poll to provide their feedback on the revised self-reporting process. 76% rated it as "Good." Click [here](#) to see all poll results.

The NRG representatives from Myanmar and Türkiye shared their assessment of GB progress in their contexts. Both highlighted the progress observed and the ongoing challenges in translating high-level commitments into tangible action at the local and national level. Türkiye's NRG representative pointed out the inadequate flexible funding, lack of inclusion in planning, and the difficulty in sustaining momentum for localisation amidst social and structural barriers, despite increased awareness on the topic over recent years. Meanwhile, Myanmar's NRG representative shared three priorities, identified during dialogues with local and international organisations: advancing equal partnership through mutual learning and power-sharing, securing quality funding, and adopting flexible reporting mechanisms.

Later, IFRC, ECHO, OCHA and NEAR presented the level of implementation of the Caucuses outcomes. The presentations highlighted progress in the localisation Caucuses (funding for localisation and the role of intermediaries), showing a shift towards making localisation the new norm. However, challenges remain in fully implementing this shift in practice, particularly in ensuring funding transparency and including local actors in decision-making. The quality funding Caucus commitment gained momentum in the past two years, with some members achieving the 30% target increase in multi-year funding from 2021 to 2023. Yet, progress is not yet at scale. The Cash Coordination Model has also seen success, reaching a 90% transition rate to coordinated cash approaches by 2024, including full success in refugee contexts and 88% in mixed settings.

The GB 3.0 Implementation Agenda

Advancing on quality funding, localisation, participation (Focus Area 1), rallying behind existing initiatives.

GB Ambassador Bessler then introduced the proposed [GB 3.0 Implementation Agenda 2026](#), which was developed based on the self-report results, discussions with Signatories in 2024, the Ambassadors' engagements with Principals, and previous GB Annual Independent Reports. The proposed Agenda followed a three-tiered approach:

- The **first tier** were the joint actions identified during the Principals' segment of the Annual Meeting 2024 (addressing the narrative, conditionalities, setting priorities and defining boundaries).
- The **second tier** focused on levers of transformation related to GB3.0 Focus Area 1 (localisation, quality funding, participation), with specific steps to advance collective goals.
- The **third tier** included initiatives under the GB3.0 Focus Area 2 (anticipatory action, innovative financing, and the nexus), where the GB's contribution needed to be sharpened over the next two months to achieve change.

The Ambassador and Senior Leader emphasised that the [levers of transformation](#) are not new commitments but stem from existing GB 3.0 commitments and Caucuses' outcomes. These levers acted as leverage points to drive progress across multiple areas simultaneously, offering a practical way to deliver on key objectives. They build on successful ongoing initiatives that could be scaled and replicated, helping Signatories achieve greater impact without adding extra processes or structures.

Find out which levers Signatories have good practices to share on or are actively leading on relevant initiatives, [here](#).

Throughout the discussion on Focus Area 1, facilitated by InterAction, Signatories shared good and new practices to progress on quality funding, localisation, and accountability to affected people while at the same time defining the way forward for the next two years. For example, regarding multi-year planning, some highlighted flexible, long-term funding agreements. To increase funding flexibility, some Signatories shared good practices on quality earmarking, pooled funds, and simplified reporting. Other Signatories focused on overheads, particularly on fair cost-sharing with local actors without extra reporting burdens, while some shared their approach on direct funding and LNA involvement through pooled funds and local advisory roles. Some participants highlighted efforts to improve tracking and reporting, strengthen LNA co-leadership, build local capacity, expand sector standards, scale cash assistance, and reduce compliance burdens through risk-sharing. The good practices presented during the Annual Meeting are available [here](#) on the Grand Bargain website, and Signatories are encouraged to submit additional initiatives to the Secretariat.

Signatories echoed the call of the Principals for a more gender transformative implementation of the GB. The newly established Community of Practice (CoP) will contribute to this effort and Signatories were invited to join. Similarly, the Signatories were invited to join the CoP on Risk Sharing and other relevant CoPs.

Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships: scaling-up anticipatory action, nexus financing and innovative financing models for greater impact

The proposed Implementation Agenda included actions to advance Focus Area 2 of the GB3.0 Framework: on Anticipatory Action, Humanitarian Innovative Financing, and the Nexus. During the discussion, the following emerged:

Anticipatory Action (AA) was recognised as a key tool for improving the efficiency of humanitarian response. Ambassador Koehler noted that, after eight months of work, the Caucus on AA produced an outcome document with concrete commitments, that would help advance Anticipatory Action. The document is currently in the process of endorsement within the Caucus, and at the time of the Annual Meeting it was endorsed by 12 of 17 Caucus members. The document was presented by Germany and WFP as current co-chairs of the Caucus, encouraging other Signatories to endorse the outcome document once finalised. Donors and organisations shared successful examples of early interventions, like cash transfers to mitigate flood impacts. However, participants stressed that AA remains underfunded and underutilised, calling for stronger integration into planning and funding.

ECHO, ICRC, UNHCR and the World Bank in the session on **Humanitarian Innovative Financing** took a pragmatic approach, particularly regarding blended finance models and green and carbon finance, highlighted in the [ODI policy brief](#) as having great potential for improving the quality of humanitarian services. However, scaling these models remained a challenge and they advocated for expanding them, acknowledging the difficulties in securing the political and financial backing necessary. In response, Ambassador Koehler invited interested Signatories to co-lead and join a CoP on the topic to tackle these challenges and further discuss the ODI policy brief's recommendations.

On the humanitarian-development **nexus**, one of the priorities highlighted by the Principals during the first Segment, Ambassador Koehler announced that he will convene a small group of actors at high-level to discuss financing of the nexus. It was suggested to leverage the momentum around the Financing for Development Conference in 2025. Collective efforts and improvements in funding mechanisms were mentioned as key for progress, with a push to continue these conversations and drive real action at both local and global levels. During this session, Norway/Norad shared its experience on combining its humanitarian and development work under one department to strengthen collective efforts. To operationalise it, they created practical guidance to improve the coordination of aid, especially in fragile areas. In parallel, Norad is also testing new funding models to support longer-term agreements, aiming to move away from short-term assistance towards durable solutions.

Discussion outcome:

- Call to endorse the outcome document of the GB Caucus on Anticipatory Action, pending clarification of last questions by the Caucus and sharing of the final document.
- Announcement that Ambassadors will convene a high-level discussion on financing the nexus soon.
- Announcement to establish a CoP on Innovative Humanitarian Financing and potentially a Caucus to scale the most promising models.

Strengthening impact at the country-level – a proposal to boost the National Reference Groups (NRGs)

Ambassador Bessler briefed Signatories about the Ambassadors' engagement with NRG leads in different contexts, with NEAR and others to explore how to move forward with GB NRGs. He then presented the proposal to reenergize NRG as an agile GB instrument, with a clear link between global discussions and actors in different contexts; replication of the 'inclusivity' of the GB idea in crises contexts. He emphasised that NRGs should not duplicate existing fora but complement, where others lacked the inclusivity of constituencies of the GB.

UNICEF facilitated the discussion, referring Signatories to the proposal to boost National Reference Groups (NRGs) as flexible tools to adapt GB commitments to local needs and create a feedback loop between global and local levels. Representatives from the NRGs in Indonesia, Yemen, and Kenya emphasised that NRGs could close the gap between global commitments and local action by ensuring effective funding to local and national actors (LNAs), accountability, and building trust and cooperation between actors. During the discussion, Signatories were encouraged to engage with National Reference Groups where they existed, co-lead where appropriate, and to clearly communicate the GB commitments to Embassies and Country Offices. As next steps, priority contexts would be identified in the coming months for a more structured engagement of NRGs with the global GB processes.

Discussion outcome:

- Agreement to boost GB National Reference Groups (NRGs); and call to all Signatories to engage with NRGs at country level, and to volunteer co-chairing an NRG in priority countries once those are identified and communicated by the Ambassadors.

Towards 2026 - Keeping the momentum with concrete actions for the next two years

The meeting concluded with the Ambassadors and OCHA summarizing the actions emerging from the Principals and Sherpa Segments, captured in the **Implementation Agenda**. They called on Signatories to operationalise commitments into concrete actions across all focus areas. It was mentioned that Risk sharing and gender, as cross-cutting priorities, must be integrated into all humanitarian efforts and the two **Communities of Practice** will serve as key platforms to advance discussions and progress on these issues.

Ambassadors Bessler and Koehler emphasized that **the GB is a vehicle for action** and not just a platform for discussion. The next two years – especially 2025 – would be critical in ensuring that the GB delivers on its promises of a more efficient and effective humanitarian response. They invited Signatories for a meeting early next year, where Signatories will be asked to share an update on their progress in advancing the agreed actions.

Annex 1 – Summary of actions per constituency based on the Implementation Agenda

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>DONORS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt strategies to increase the flexibility of funding, e.g. increase contributions to pooled funds including NGO-led funds, regional earmarking and quality earmarking 2. Increase contributions to pooled funds that provide at least 25% of funding to LNAs and that include LNAs in their advisory or other oversight boards. 3. Increase investments in capacity strengthening of LNAs, including for their engagement in decision-making fora at the country level. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>AID ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shift towards multiyear planning/budgeting in protracted crises and provide multi-year funding to LNAs. 2. Solidify and expand progress on overheads to increase levels received by LNAs without increasing their reporting burden. 3. Improve internal systems to track and report on funding, including for LNAs and WLOs. 4. OCHA supports the equitable and meaningful participation of LNAs, including WLOs in HCTs, ICCGs, CBPF Advisory Boards and Cluster Lead Agencies ensure that LNAs' co-leadership of clusters is the preferred arrangement unless inappropriate or unfeasible.
<p><u>Donors AND Aid Organisations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Champion collective efforts and sector-wide standards such as CHS to progress on the inclusion of affected populations in the design and adaptation of responses. 2. Prioritise and scale-up cash assistance as an institutional and system-wide approach, thereby empowering affected populations to drive decisions with dignity and choice. 3. Replicate and scale initiatives to reduce requirements/compliance burden and leverage further the risk-sharing approach in partnerships. 4. Substantially increase funding for anticipatory action, track fuel and build funding, and improve coordination, in line with the caucus outcome (once finalized). 5. Contribute to a more gender transformative GB, including through sharing experiences and learning as part of the Community of Practice on Gender. 6. Increase the impact of the GB at country level, including by engaging in National Reference Groups (NRGs), including in the priority contexts to be communicated soon. 7. Engage in consultations on issues that emerged from the meeting and the Principals' discussion as relevant (e.g. on nexus, innovative financing, narrative, reducing conditionalities, and priority setting of humanitarian action). 	