



Humanitaire Top NL 2015

Paper of the working group 'Roles of the UN'

Preamble

The UN is an important actor in response to humanitarian crises. The UN has different roles in these crises: it often takes part in the political process in a country in conflict, it is involved in peace keeping and peace enforcement operations and thirdly the UN is leading in the provision of humanitarian aid. The political and military roles of the UN are in conflict with its humanitarian mandate where impartiality and independence are guiding principles. Moreover, in the provision of humanitarian aid the UN has multiple roles as well: the UN takes care of co-ordination, it is providing funding to national and international NGOs and at the same time is involved in project implementation.

Many NGOs right now are following the UN lead in the field, especially when it comes to security, transport of cargo and personnel and negotiations. As a result some of these NGOs do not have the capacity to act independently from the UN system and struggle to respond rapidly in those situations where the UN is hampered for political or bureaucratic reasons.

In 2013 and 2014 we have seen that the humanitarian system as led by the UN has been slow in its response to the crises in South Sudan (Maban), the Central African Republic and Northern Iraq as well as to the Ebola crisis, while cross border humanitarian aid for Syria was longtime hampered by the lack of a security council resolution. It is important that NGOs invest in their capacities to act in these cases outside of the UN umbrella.

Statements on NGO pledges

It is important that both government (national, provincial and local) and NGOs enhance their independent response capacities to humanitarian crises and become a viable alternative to implementing the largest part of the humanitarian aid through the UN.

NGOs pledge to further develop their capacity to independently respond to humanitarian emergencies. This concerns trained personnel, systems and funding. Important is to be able to act fast and with a certain degree of financial independence.

It is important that the actors mentioned above including NGOs develop their own capacities in the field and therefore will have to rely less on the UN leading in security, transport and negotiations on access.

NGOs will be open and transparent to the Dutch public and to donors on the ways response capacity is built further into the organization.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Acknowledge that the UN system, by definition of its nature, is not always able to respond adequately to complex crisis situations.

Recognize that channeling funding through the UN system is not always the best way to guarantee a timely and adequate response that is in support of the need for independent humanitarian action.

Invest in capacities of both governments and selected NGOs to enhance their ability to respond and hold them accountable on the results.

Evaluate the results of the newly established Relief Fund and its different components, both midterm and at the end of the three years.

Depending on the context: consider increased support to national and international NGOs where these have a clear added value.

Advocate on the World Humanitarian Summit to make coordination processes of humanitarian assistance more context specific as roles of the different actors are very different in the response e.g. to a natural disaster and in conflict.