



**CENTER ON
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION**

The Preparedness Challenge in Humanitarian Assistance

with LESTER SALAMON AND ASSOCIATES

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The issues

The report assesses the state of preparedness capacities of the international humanitarian system. It recognizes progress toward expanding the modalities for disaster preparedness but argues that these developments do not sufficiently enhance the coherence and responsiveness to humanitarian emergencies.

Preparedness is critical in disaster assistance because rapid onset disasters require a time sensitive response. If local, national and regional response mechanisms are absent, external assistance is required. The ability of external agencies to respond quickly and effectively rests on individual agency pre-investment in operational preparedness. This poses a significant challenge to humanitarian agencies. In fact, without a secure and predictable source of income organizations encounter real difficulty creating even the most basic preparedness capacities.

The report explores the preparedness systems of three prominent humanitarian agencies, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Oxfam (GB), and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Each agency profile outlines their respective preparedness systems and gauges what effect advanced financing has on their operations. These examples highlight the positive relationship between preparedness and emergency response.

The organization of preparedness

The conceptual, operational and financial aspects of a preparedness system require a thorough re-examination. The report identifies three main components of operational preparedness: contingency planning, situation monitoring and needs assessment, and initial response capability. There are fixed and variable costs to the development of each. While humanitarian agencies acknowledge the importance of preparedness, few have the resources to make a significant investment. The report argues that a solution lies with a joint financial and political commitment by individual agencies and governments.

The existing financial arrangements worked out between agencies and donor governments address some of the underlying 'system challenges' on a case by case basis, such as building staff capabilities, establishing stand-by arrangements, and creating stockpiles. However, these mechanisms largely neglect 'agency challenges' as they seek to move into potential problem areas before they escalate into major crises. The majority of frontline humanitarian agencies rely on government contracts to deliver humanitarian assistance in large-scale emergencies. However, the contract process, while ensuring donor confidence, can be time consuming, thus undermining the potential impact of external assistance.

Perspectives on preparedness

The agency case studies support the conclusion that the timing of donor financial assistance needs to be improved. There is a disproportionate investment in post-emergency response relative to investment in preparedness. Donor practices underscore their willingness to react to emergencies but most donors are unwilling to invest in agency preparedness. In addition to supporting the direct costs of relief operations, most donor funding policies allow for overhead

costs and back-funding which assists the financial position of NGOs but they are extremely reluctant to support preparedness systems of frontline humanitarian agencies.

Consequences of and implications for preparedness

Drawing from operational experiences, the report illustrates how preparedness improves agency performance and responsiveness to needs. The effectiveness of a response is influenced by the quality of contingency planning, situation monitoring and needs assessment. In terms of an agency's ability to respond quickly, initial response mechanisms such as emergency funds are essential. In circumstances where emergency funds were subject to numerous appeals, or when unrestricted funds were limited, agencies were less able to respond in the immediate term.

To improve on current practice, the report argues that international humanitarian assistance can be strengthened if agencies and donors adopted or improved on collaborative arrangements that go beyond the contract model of reactive response. The report highlights several encouraging developments to improve rapid response mechanisms and arrangements for building direct preparedness support. Further experimentation and dialogue will be needed to overcome the agency / donor divide that acts as a significant barrier to enhancing the preparedness systems of frontline humanitarian agencies.

I. Introduction

"The best time to plan for emergencies is always yesterday."

Weiss and Collins [1996:191]

The proliferation of complex humanitarian emergencies which overwhelm local and national capacities to cope has necessitated the formation of an international humanitarian assistance system to provide rapid emergency relief. In spite of efforts over the past decade to improve international humanitarian response, this system remains hobbled by the lack of preparedness mechanisms on both the individual agency and system-wide levels.

Preparedness is essential for a timely, competent, and cost-effective emergency response. As numerous case studies of humanitarian crises have found, inadequate preparedness results in delayed, less effective and costlier delivery of emergency relief. However, investing resources in a preparedness system poses a significant challenge to the majority of international humanitarian agencies.

The crux of the dilemma is that most emergency relief funding is reactive, in the form of emergency appeals and grant agreements negotiated between donors and implementing agencies only after the crisis has occurred. There is a widely shared view among humanitarian agencies, particularly the private, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), that reliable up-front funds for preparedness are lacking. In essence, donor procedures have placed the burden on the agencies to raise the necessary "risk capital" for building preparedness systems. Yet the voluntary basis of the income with which most NGOs meet their core costs makes it extremely difficult to make sustainable investments in preparedness. Different agencies have responded to this challenge with varying success. As this report will attempt to show, the effectiveness of individual agencies' responses to crises has been closely linked to the extent of their investment in preparedness. The fragile and makeshift nature of the preparedness structures which have

emerged under these circumstances points to a clearly sub-optimal use of resources, which runs counter to the interests of donors, agencies and, most seriously, the crisis-affected populations.

This report, which examines the preparedness capacities of three international humanitarian agencies, illustrates the challenge of preparedness from both an agency and a system-wide perspective. Section 2 describes the essential components of an individual agency preparedness system (i.e., contingency planning, situation monitoring and needs assessment, and initial response). Section 3 examines the major preparedness features of the international humanitarian system. It finds that current funding arrangements address some of the rapid response challenges, such as the need for emergency response funds, stand-by arrangements, and stockpiles. However, these mechanisms do not address the specific preparedness challenges facing the operational agencies.

Section 4 provides case studies of Oxfam (GB), the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). It outlines their preparedness capacities and how these are financed. By examining recent operations, it then underscores the importance of investing in preparedness.

Section 5 summarizes the different aspects of the preparedness problem, drawing conclusions from the evidence presented in the previous section.

Section 6 looks at new funding arrangements which have begun in incremental ways to address the need for individual agency preparedness, as well as organizational and coordination issues relevant to effective preparedness and response. It concludes by proposing ways to strengthen preparedness, building upon these initial efforts.

1.1 Methodology

This study emerged from a meeting convened by the Center on International Cooperation, which brought together officials from donor agencies and NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance. [3](#) Participants agreed that investing in preparedness was critical to effective humanitarian response, that it presents a collective challenge, and that the role of up-front funding for preparedness deserved further examination.

The scope and method of inquiry were developed by a research team and officials from participating agencies: the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Oxfam (GB), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The research team profiled the preparedness capacities of each agency and where available their associated costs. Drawing on the operational experiences of each agency, the research team was able to illustrate how up-front funds influence the quality and timeliness of humanitarian assistance.

It is methodologically difficult to empirically explain the relationship between preparedness inputs and emergency response outcomes. The few assessments of agency performance using economic analysis have experienced shortcomings. Hallam [1996] and the Joint Evaluation report on Rwanda [1996] have perhaps taken the closest look using this approach. Despite the significant resources available to the Rwanda evaluation and donor interest, data limitations prevented cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency analysis. While some donors have argued that the empirical evidence to date has not demonstrated that preparedness in the form of up-front funding yields benefits, Hallam suggests that the reason for this is, "simply because until now it has not been considered worthwhile recording expenditures in a format that allows for cost-efficiency analysis." [4](#)

This analysis was conducted largely in the head offices of the three agencies and relied heavily on agency collaboration. A literature survey and interviews with other NGOs and close observers of international humanitarian assistance were also conducted.

At the time of this writing, data from UNHCR was incomplete, and that which was available posed comparison problems with the other two agencies because of UNHCR's complex organizational and different financing structures. The comparative aspect of the paper is therefore more focused on the two non-governmental agencies, IRC and OXFAM.

II. Defining Preparedness

It should be stated at the outset that the ideal system of emergency preparedness lies not with the international rapid response agencies, but at the local, national and regional levels. Currently these capacities vary considerably from region to region. Only recently have indigenous efforts been supported by development assistance agencies. Notable among these are the European Community Humanitarian Office's Disaster Preparedness program (DIPECHO) and USAID's Prevention, Mitigation, and Preparedness Program. However, until such local preparedness capacity is further developed, there will remain a need for international emergency agencies with global reach, capable of providing rapid relief aid to populations in crisis. This report deals specifically with the capacities of this latter set of agencies and the need to enhance their preparedness. [5](#)

When disaster strikes, international humanitarian agencies need to be prepared to react quickly to counter what the Center for Disease Control (CDC) calls the "primary effects" of emergencies, [6](#) those that set in rapidly, as opposed to "secondary effects" which unfold gradually and allow time for a planned response. Most natural disasters such as earthquakes, tidal waves and floods occur with little warning. Even in the case of cyclical disasters, such as hurricanes, the precise onset and level of impact are difficult to predict. Likewise, while early warning mechanisms may serve to alert the international community to the imminent outbreak of war, conflicts and refugee movements are themselves often unpredictable. The initial onset or "acute phase" of a sudden-onset emergency, is vitally important because it is in this period when the affected population is most at risk. This is particularly evident in large-scale population displacements, where rapid response is crucial in the first days and weeks to prevent or contain the spread of communicable diseases, provide shelter against the elements, and provide for basic human needs to prevent excess morbidity and mortality. For purposes of illustration, the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda [1996] report, (hereafter called Joint Evaluation [1996]), observed that the cholera outbreak in the Goma, Zaire refugee camp was "extremely severe and explosive. Almost 50,000 people (between 6-10% of the total refugee population) died during the first month after the influx, principally from cholera and dysentery." [7](#) Both diseases are preventable by early sanitation intervention, and easily treatable with an organized epidemic preparedness system. An agency's preparedness capacity, as defined below, can thus translate directly into lives saved by enabling a more rapid and effective response.

2.1 Components of a Preparedness System

While there is no one blueprint for agencies to follow, it is possible to identify basic common elements of preparedness systems. The agencies IRC, Oxfam and UNHCR, all of whom provide assistance to alleviate the primary effects of emergencies, were each asked to indicate which proactive tasks they deemed essential for ensuring an effective emergency response. The following set of core preparedness functions was compiled based on this information:

(a) Contingency Arrangements

Contingency arrangements are the set of activities that must occur in advance of a crisis to ensure that the human and material resources are readily available. These include:

- Contingency planning process
- Training emergency support staff and standby personnel
- Creating ready access to relief supplies in the form of stockpiles or stand-by arrangements with suppliers
- Standby arrangements for transport
- Research and development (appropriate water and sanitation technologies, etc.)
- Fundraising plans and cultivating relationships with key actors (UN, donors, NGOs)
- Pre-positioning of materials in areas of risk
- Protocols and organizational support for needs assessment and response teams

(b) Situation Monitoring and Needs Assessment

Situation monitoring and needs assessment consist of the activities required to identify crisis situations before they become critical and determine appropriate response. These include:

- Surveying of areas of risk
- Identifying sites for assessment work
- Deploying need assessments teams
- Establishing adequate early communications about conditions as they develop
- Maintaining situation monitoring personnel and equipment in the field
- Developing appropriate response

(c) Initial Response

An agency's initial response consists of the mobilization and deployment of personnel, equipment, and materials to a crisis site, including:

- Activating funding arrangements, stand-by personnel and supply arrangements
- Mobilizing and deploying permanent, stand-by personnel and hire local personnel as required
- Establishing an operations site with logistics and communication systems
- Delivering emergency goods
- Coordinating response with other humanitarian agencies

These elements of a preparedness system must be institutionalized and systematized in order for an agency to mobilize the material and human resources needed to respond quickly and effectively to humanitarian emergencies. Unfortunately, current funding arrangements for humanitarian operations are not conducive to the development of such systems, and preparedness among the majority of individual agencies is, by their own admission, inadequate.

2.2 Current Practice

In the main, government donors fund the emergency services provided by NGOs in full or on a cost-sharing basis. Typically it is only after establishing a field presence in the emergency area, making contact with donors, developing a project proposal and demonstrating a financial contribution to the cost of the project that agencies can secure the necessary operational income from donors. The majority of NGOs rely on such grant arrangements to pay the costs of their relief operations, yet this funding is by nature unpredictable, and creates a time lag in response efforts. Indeed, it may often take several weeks to negotiate a contract, and then several weeks more before the funds are received. This time lag represents a prohibitively long period in the early, critical stages of an unfolding emergency. In exceptional circumstances, donors will make resources available on short notice to implementing agencies, but the normal period from proposal submission until the money is available is substantially longer.

The fact that donors can select from among a large number of implementing agencies relieves them of supporting any particular agencies in advance of an actual crisis. Donors can therefore by-pass the issue of up-front investment for preparedness. This standard operating mode creates a situation where agencies are compelled to use their limited unrestricted funds toward the inefficient, reactive start-up process described above, rather than investing them in preparedness systems.

III. An Overview of Emergency Response Capacities

International assistance is a collective effort and the capabilities of individual agencies are augmented and enhanced through coordination. It is therefore useful to situate individual preparedness systems of agencies (Section 2.1) in the context of the system-wide preparedness arrangements.

The international humanitarian system has witnessed a steady build-up of preparedness capacities over the past decade. According to a recent UN report, there is a "full gamut of rapid deployment teams, stand-by arrangements with donor governments and stockpiles of equipment and relief supplies." ⁸ A representative picture of these capacities is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Organization of Preparedness for Humanitarian Action

A. Contingency Planning	B. Situation Monitoring	B. Needs Assessment	C. Initial Response		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Development and maintenance of rapid response mechanisms · Operational support units · Intelligence units · Capacity building · Training · Research & Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Early-warning systems - at field level - within agencies · Field presence of UN, donors and NGOs 	UN, donor and NGO needs assessment teams	Emergency Response Funds	Rapid Response Mechanisms	Lending and Grant Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Development banks · Regional and sub-regional organizations · Donors Humanitarian Agency (primarily OECD member states) · UN agencies
			<i>UN system:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · OCHA \$50 m. Central Emergency Revolving Fund · UNHCR \$25m. Emergency Fund, \$35m Program Reserve fund · WFP \$30m. Immediate Response Account · UNICEF \$30m. biannual Emergency Program Fund · WHO \$0.9m. biannual Emergency Revolving Fund 	<i>Stand-by personnel:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Civilian: - Roster agencies - Rapid response teams (WFP, UNICEF & UNHCR) - Search and Rescue · Military: - Military - Civil Defence - Civil Protection Units 	<i>Stand-by goods and equipment:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UN, donor and NGO stock-piles
			<i>Int'l NGOs:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ICRC (CHF) 10m. Disaster Relief Emergency Fund · Some major NGOs (eg. Oxfam UK, CARE USA) have emergency funds 		
			<i>Country Level:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embassy and UN field office emergency response funds 		

Source: OCHA, Emergency Response and Relief Coordination, www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/index.html; UN [1995].

Table 1 illustrates the major actors and elements of preparedness and organizes them under the relevant preparedness category (A. Standby Capacity; B. Situation Monitoring and Needs Assessment; and C. Initial Response). The solid line that divides categories A and B from C distinguishes between those elements required in advance of an emergency and those that apply afterwards.

The solid line also divides the activities and the contributions of the collective actors. On the whole, the operative agencies (UN agencies and NGOs) make a greater financial investment in categories A and B than do government donors. Activities in categories A and B are financed by these agencies through general appeals and other fund raising methods. Conversely, donors make their greatest contribution to funding UN emergency response funds, standby mechanisms and managing grant-making facilities. As category C attests, donors have made a considerable financial investment in emergency response. Combined, the emergency funds and program reserves of the principal UN humanitarian agencies total \$170 million ⁹, and more still is available through individual donor grant making facilities. However, these emergency response funds and grant-making facilities are designed for re-active response and do not support those pro-active preparedness activities, contingency planning, situation monitoring or needs assessment (categories A and B).

Although mobilizing resources is essential for a quick response, other preparedness functions must be in place before crises occur, in order to make effective use of those rapid response mechanisms. Moreover, the sum of these categories (A. Contingency Planning; B. Situation Monitoring and Needs Assessment; and C. Initial Response) does not amount to a coherent system. Indeed, the available funds are scattered and access to each is restricted, by sector and by agency. This allocation of funds does not address the challenges confronting implementing agencies as they seek to improve their preparedness capacities in advance of crises.

IV. Inputs and Outcomes of Investing in Preparedness: Agency Case Studies

To better understand the challenges agencies face in developing preparedness systems, the research team examined the experiences of three humanitarian assistance agencies, UNHCR, Oxfam (GB), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). These agencies, representing a multilateral organization, a European and an American NGO respectively, have each developed institutional and financial arrangements to facilitate a rapid response to emergencies. The level of preparedness the three have achieved differs according to their respective institutional status and funding base, yet all three express the need for improvement in this area. The UNHCR, as an intergovernmental organization, receives core budget support from governments. While inadequate to meet current needs, it does provide for a more predictable stream of income than NGOs are able to generate. Oxfam, unlike most other NGO's, has made considerable progress toward developing a comprehensive preparedness system. This has been accomplished by developing a sizable funding stream through charity shops and public appeals. In a situation more typical of NGOs, IRC's preparedness system has been patched together using resources from disparate sources.

What follows is a comparison of the three agencies' preparedness structures and financing mechanisms, and case illustrations of how different preparedness capacities have affected field operations in emergency situations.

4.1 UNHCR

Since 1991, UNHCR has introduced a range of instruments to enhance its emergency preparedness capabilities. ¹⁰ Drawing on core budget resources, UNHCR has made significant strides in building a comprehensive preparedness system, and of the agencies examined here, has the greatest access to emergency response resources. However, UNHCR's preparedness system is vulnerable to the vagaries of annual fundraising and donor response to its flash appeals. Furthermore, the activities crucial to rapid response, such as pre-positioning goods and country specific measures, are currently under-funded. Drawing on emergency reserves to fund these activities is possible, but by doing so weakens UNHCR's financial position and diverts needed money from existing programs.

Preparedness Structures

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (EPRS) was established in 1992 to improve UNHCR's emergency operations and enable the organization to respond to emergencies anywhere in the world within 72 hours. For this, EPRS has a staff of 12, access to relief goods and services, and emergency funds. EPRS staff are responsible for managing emergency response resources (stock-piles and emergency equipment), performing assessments, coordinating assistance and establishing response networks with NGOs and government agencies, and maintaining a roster of approximately 500 technical consultants. ¹¹ In addition, the EPRS can mobilize its 30 member Emergency Response Team to establish or enhance a field presence. The EPRS is also responsible for training UNHCR staff and working with other sections and departments within UNHCR to ensure that the organization as a whole is 'emergency ready'. The cost of the EPRS unit for 1998 was \$1,357,700 (US).

Funding

The core costs of the EPRS are funded from the UNHCR's General Program fund, which is supported from an annual general appeal to donor governments. By virtue of its intergovernmental status, UNHCR enjoys a more reliable funding base than private agencies, but this support for core emergency functions is by no means certain in every case.

The operational costs of the EPRS are funded from the UNHCR's Emergency Fund or assigned to the operational budgets of country offices. In the latter instance, field offices in effect must pay for emergency response out of their regular program funds, which are not always sufficient to meet new emergency costs. When operational funding shortfalls occur, the UNHCR issues a 'flash appeal' and funds are sought for the initial three months of an emergency. Thereafter the action ceases to be described as an emergency and becomes a special program — though fundraising may, of course, continue.

UNHCR's \$25 million Emergency Fund finances relief operations when there is no provision in the programs approved by the Executive Committee or the General Assembly. The Emergency Fund is intended to enable UNHCR to respond to a crisis without having to delay operations while donor support is secured. The High Commissioner may allocate up to US\$8 million annually for any one emergency. Funds drawn from the Emergency Fund do not have to be replenished unless the Fund drops below \$8 million. However, UNHCR may not be able to replenish the

Emergency Fund in its annual budget because of a general budgetary shortfall, which naturally injects a certain amount of unpredictability into the agency's emergency response capability.

UNHCR can also draw on the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The CERF was established in 1991 to enable UN agencies to respond rapidly to emergencies when their own budgets were insufficient. The CERF has a target reserve level of US\$ 50 million and is financed by voluntary contributions. Except under exceptional circumstances, all funds drawn from the CERF have to be reimbursed as a first charge against income subsequently received.

Overall Assessment

Despite the array of emergency response funds and support units the UNHCR has built up in recent years, it still faces obstacles to accessing sufficient funds for preparedness and responding quickly to humanitarian assistance crises. As a 1996 UNHCR report laments, the agency's preparedness activities still depend on the "willingness of donors to provide funding for preparedness measures before an emergency occurs". ¹² Nonetheless, compared to the other agencies examined here, UNHCR's funding base is the most 'secure', allowing the organization to budget for fixed and recurrent preparedness costs.

4.2 Oxfam

If UNHCR reports difficulties, the challenges facing NGOs, which lack UNHCR's mechanisms for direct access to donor government money, are even more acute. Oxfam, however, is an exceptional example of an agency that has been able to create both a preparedness system and an emergency response fund. The agency is able to do this because it has developed an income stream from its charity shops and general appeals that allows Oxfam to invest in preparedness.

Preparedness Structures

Oxfam's Emergencies Department (ED) is the chief administrative mechanism for Oxfam's emergency humanitarian assistance. The ED is part of the International Division and acts as a "service wing" to Oxfam's geographic programs and 70 offices worldwide. The budget for the ED in 1998 including warehouse maintenance was 2,015,000 pounds sterling.

The ED's mission is to ensure Oxfam has the management, technical and logistical capacity to gear up for and respond rapidly to humanitarian emergencies. The Department hires and trains program staff on emergency preparedness and emergency response; monitors, assesses and appraises emergency situations; evaluates the quality and appropriateness of emergency programs throughout the project cycle; provides management, administrative and logistical support to field operations; appraises and manages emergency programs in countries where Oxfam does not have a presence; manages the Catastrophe Fund (see below); and develops equipment for emergency response. ¹³

The ED is a sizeable operation with 15 core staff in addition to 30 Emergency Service Personnel (ESP). ESPs are qualified professionals (engineers, health workers, logisticians, etc.) who are full-time employees. When they are not deployed to assist emergency field operations, they work in other Oxfam departments. The ESPs provide a dependable cadre of in-house experts familiar

with Oxfam's operating procedures and equipment, as opposed to the more costly and time consuming alternative of recruiting emergency response specialists at short notice.

Funding

Oxfam is in a unique position having approximately 65% of its income raised from charity shops and from public appeals. The remaining 35% comes from donor funded projects. A considerable proportion of its income, therefore, is unrestricted and can be used toward building preparedness.

Oxfam allocates 4million pounds sterling annually to its Catastrophe Fund (CF) from its general reserves. [14](#) The Catastrophe Fund is managed by the ED and enables it to respond to crises independent of government aid. In large emergencies, the Fund allows for an initial response and buys time until additional resources are leveraged. In 1998, for example, the 3 million Catastrophe Fund (FY 1998) was followed by approximately 17 million from donor grants. The Catastrophe Fund and the monies it leverages represent approximately two thirds of Oxfam's global emergency expenditure. [15](#)

The Catastrophe Fund's dedicated funds are critical to Oxfam's rapid response capability. Without the Fund, the only way Oxfam could underwrite start-up funds would be to draw on its institutional reserves. This practice is tantamount to mortgaging Oxfam's future because there is no guarantee that it will be able to recoup emergency expenditure at a later date, unless Oxfam made prior arrangements with a donor to 'back-fund' Oxfam's expenses. However, policy guidelines on back-funding are neither clear nor consistent among donors.

Operational Impact

The following are two examples in which Oxfam's abilities to respond quickly to emergent needs were put to the test. The first illustrates how Oxfam's internal resources can enable a preparedness stance, even where donor support is lacking, making a crucial difference in field performance. The second shows the limits of its internal resources.

- Goma, Zaire refugee camp (1994). Prior to the Rwanda genocide, Oxfam requested donor support for pre-positioning goods in the Great Lakes region. As no apparent need was present, Oxfam was unable to secure donor support. Despite this, Oxfam's assessment led it to preposition supplies in the area and the costs were charged to the Catastrophe Fund. In the words of the Joint Evaluation report: "Prior to the [Goma] influx, Oxfam had pre-positioned sufficient stocks of water pumps, storage materials and pipes for a population of 50,000 refugees, at a cost of approximately 400,000 using the agency's own funds. Though quite inadequate in the face of such a massive influx, the equipment bought time and allowed the agency to start operations as soon as an emergency team arrived from the UK." [16](#) Had other agencies or donors followed Oxfam's preparedness lead, the Goma site would have had better access to safe drinking water and reduced the explosive spread of cholera.
- North Sudan, 1996. In October 1996 Oxfam deployed a needs assessment team to gauge the food crisis in Northern Sudan. The nutritional survey illustrated the severity of the situation and Oxfam developed a food distribution program for 90,000 people. The UK Department for International Development agreed to fund the therapeutic feeding program but not the complementary food distribution because of a disagreement with the Sudanese government. Finally, in May 1997, a food purchase arrangement was agreed with both governments. Oxfam's experience in North Sudan illustrates a scenario where the political context of humanitarian aid can delay the delivery of time-critical aid. In this

case, DfID did not want to support the Sudanese government whose war was the source of humanitarian crisis in the first place. Political judgement aside, malnutrition inevitably worsened as a result of the delay, driving up the human cost of non-intervention.

Overall Assessment

Even with its existing preparedness capacities and resources, Oxfam still faces continual wrenching judgement calls about whether to respond to developing emergencies and how. The Catastrophe Fund, though sizeable, is finite. It operates effectively when replenished at the beginning of the year but as the budget year progresses and the Catastrophe Fund is drawn down, the organization is in a poorer position to react. Surely, more resources would help, but so too would more timely donor payment of awarded contracts improve the Catastrophe Fund's revolving facility. Lengthy delays in awarding contracts limit Oxfam's room to maneuver.

4.3 International Rescue Committee (IRC)

If the Oxfam experience shows what is possible for an NGO to develop, the experience of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) demonstrates the strains that the current system imposes even on highly respected agencies that lack Oxfam's extraordinary income stream.

Preparedness Structures

Unlike Oxfam, emergency preparedness is a relatively recent activity for IRC and understandably a more modest one. IRC created the Emergency Preparedness and Response unit (EPR) in 1994 as a reaction to a critical worsening of the world refugee situation and its recognition of the importance of preparedness. The EPR unit is charged with monitoring potential disasters, overseeing initial response, and maintaining a pro-active position in areas of administration, finance, personnel and operational support. The tasks assigned to the EPR unit mirror those of Oxfam's Emergencies Department but on a more modest scale. As presently constituted, the EPR unit employs three full-time employees, including a director, an assistant, and a recruiter. It collaborates with other personnel within the agency to help with needs assessments and initial response assistance. The EPR budget for 1997 was approximately half million dollars.

Funding

Unlike UNHCR or Oxfam, but like the majority of humanitarian assistance NGOs, IRC does not have a reliable source of up-front funds for preparedness. In 1997, 13% of its income was derived from public contributions and the remaining 87% came from donor grants and contracts. To finance the costs of its preparedness unit, IRC has had to patch together core support from a variety of disparate sources. Likewise, its operational resources are derived from a combination of money from its general appeals and operational grants from various US private foundations.

Initial funding for IRC's EPR unit came from a two-year, \$290,000 grant from the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM). To sustain the basic EPR unit after the State Department grant expired, IRC secured funding from the Packard Foundation and supplemented this from internal agency funds, including the interest earned on an endowment grant (The Leo Cherne Fund). At the same time, the agency has not managed to secure funding for a proposed Rapid Response Team that would give IRC the ability to deploy

emergency managers to start up an operation. This capability was projected to cost approximately \$182,000.

Currently, IRC is able to finance the initial response costs for two emergencies per year. IRC staff indicated that twice this amount would be optimal. Any additional emergency response must be financed by appeals, grants and government contracts. While operational costs are easier to raise funds for, in part because the public and donors are more willing to support relief efforts than the overhead costs of preparedness units, the time required to secure these appeals and grants is time lost for preparing and launching the response.

Philanthropic agencies and the US government provide operational support on a contract by contract basis, although some foundation grants are earmarked in advance which is extremely helpful because it shortens the time required to release the funds. Two recent developments have improved IRC's response capacity. In 1996, IRC secured a \$1 million grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation to establish an emergency revolving fund. This initial grant now totals \$1.7 million, augmented by private matching donations. Unlike Oxfam's emergency response fund which is replenished every year, IRC's fund has to be repaid. Repayment can be difficult when emergencies do not attract private and government interest but the fund does enhance IRC's responsiveness. In another important development, IRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the US State Department. It earmarked a \$500,000 emergency response fund to finance IRC's start-up costs. Under this agreement IRC still has to write a proposal to secure the funds, but the arrangement does reduce the time required to access funds once an assistance plan is agreed. Nevertheless, IRC's funding source have different authorization procedures and restrictions on how the funds are used.

Operational Impact

As with the Oxfam case study, the two examples below were chosen to demonstrate first a successful field operation where the agency managed to respond immediately independent of donor support, and one in which the lack of readily available resources led to tragically costly delays.

- Congo, (1997). In November 1996, IRC used the LeBrun Foundation up-front grant to deploy a five person team to Bukavu to respond to a massive refugee influx. Operating from a base in Bukavu, the IRC team set up three way-stations to provide emergency medical care to the refugees as they began the 100 kilometer trek back to Rwanda through Bukavu. The agency also ran mobile clinics to provide transportation to those who were too sick or injured to walk. Having established an operational presence, IRC secured a \$1.1 million grant from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance to expand its operations.
- Northern Kenya, Walda refugee camp (1992). The health conditions of Somali, Ethiopian, and Sudanese refugees living in the Walda Camp were poor, evidenced by extremely high death rates. IRC sponsored a \$15,000 needs assessment and developed a funding proposal as it was unable to finance the operation itself. Time delays occurred in negotiating access to the area with the government and discussing its medical and sanitation proposal with donors. IRC eventually secured a \$800,000 project grant. When the money was allocated, IRC sent a thirteen-person team to the camp to implement a sanitation program, improve the supplemental feeding program, and train community health workers. Within four weeks, the number of deaths in the camp declined from 70 to 14 per day.

Overall Assessment

IRC has made important headway in developing its preparedness capacities, yet support for the EPR unit is fragile. Needs assessment and initial response remains supported by a patchwork of grants and contracts, each with time and financial limitations. The assembly of these early response funds entails a considerable amount of work, uncertainty and delay. Moreover, the various funds have restrictions determined by the political and operational constraints of the funding agencies. IRC's objective to increase unrestricted funds for preparedness would reduce its reliance on public appeals and government contracts and help the agency improve its response time.

4.4 Agency Preparedness Costs

Table 2 outlines the preparedness investment of IRC and Oxfam. In Row A, their total preparedness cost is presented as a percent of overseas emergency assistance. The preparedness costs include contingency planning, situation monitoring and needs assessment and initial response expenditure at headquarters and in the field. Excluded are overhead costs of maintaining overseas offices, an omission resulting from a lack of obtainable data. As a consequence, the figures underestimates the preparedness cost as a percentage of emergency expenditure. For comparative purposes, Rows B, C and D presents each preparedness category cost as a fraction of total preparedness costs.

Table 2: Preparedness Cost Profiles

	Oxfam (1998)	IRC (1997)
A. Preparedness Costs as % of Overseas Emergency Assistance	24	9.5
B. Contingency Planning (as % of Preparedness Costs)	21	10
C. Situation Monitoring & Needs Assessment (as % of Preparedness Costs)	9	30
D. Initial Response (as % of Preparedness Costs)	70	60

[Calculated by the authors on the basis of data supplied by agencies]

In terms of preparedness costs relative to overall emergency expenditures, Oxfam, with its large unrestricted funding base, spends two and a half times more than IRC (Row A). One might argue that this demonstrates IRC's more efficient use of resources, but IRC admits its current level of expenditure in preparedness is inadequate. Even Oxfam staff maintain that their preparedness system could benefit from additional resources. As a basis of comparison, it is interesting to note

that the US Federal Emergency Management Agency allocates 20% of its budget to mitigation and preparedness activities. [17](#) This figure is closer to Oxfam's than IRC's.

V. The Costs of Not Investing in Preparedness

The case studies in the previous section illustrate anecdotally the direct operational benefits that preparedness — in particular up-front, flexible funding — has on the speed and effectiveness of an agency's response.

There is also compelling evidence that the lack of resources for preparedness not only delays humanitarian action but can also ratchet up the future costs of assistance. One example can be found in the Rwanda emergency in 1994. The findings of the Joint Evaluation report included a WFP internal report that "indicated that substantial savings" in operating costs could have resulted if the WFP and UNHCR had the up-front funds to invest in road and railway repairs prior to the Rwanda crisis:

"Had the UNHCR and WFP sufficient funds available, the upgrading of the road [between Uganda and Kivu] identified by UNHCR's North Kivu Contingency Plan might well have been implemented before the influx. This would have enabled a much greater proportion of the supplies to Goma to have been transported overland from Uganda rather than through the extensive and costly use of air transport." [18](#)

Hallam [1996] and the Joint Evaluation [1996] team calculated that the use of military aircraft increased food delivery costs to Rwanda by a factor of 4 to 8 times compared to commercial airlift. [19](#) When airlift was used instead of road transport, transportation costs increased by 20 times. Considering that food supply, transportation and distribution are typically the single largest expense, failure to develop contingency plans and act on them can substantially increase future costs. It is interesting to observe that those agencies with up-front funds at their disposal, namely MSF, ICRC and Oxfam all acted on their contingency plans and pre-positioned supplies accordingly. When the need for assistance became clear, donors switched to reactive mode and financed expensive military airlift — a clearly inefficient use of monies. In these cases, had the agencies the requisite funds to act on their situational analysis, human suffering could have been alleviated and the future costs of humanitarian assistance reduced.

VI. Conclusion: Meeting the Preparedness Challenge

A number of conclusions flow from this review of the experiences of several prominent humanitarian agencies. First, until local or regional capacity is developed to cope with humanitarian crises, there are considerable advantages in having professional relief agencies such as UNHCR, Oxfam, and IRC in a position to respond quickly to developing crises anywhere in the world. Second, the international community has made advances in the past decade toward strengthening mechanisms for rapid response. However, while the system of collective humanitarian action is capable of delivering billions of dollars worth of assistance annually, the allocative mechanisms are seriously flawed from the perspective of agencies and humanitarian assistance as a whole. Thus, although both donors and implementing agencies share the common goals of effectiveness and cost-efficiency of humanitarian assistance, these goals are thwarted by current financing practices.

This situation might usefully be viewed as a "principal-agent" problem, i.e., a problem of uncertainty and control. A donor (the principal) has an interest in building the capacity of its implementing partner (the agent) to respond rapidly and effectively to emergencies. However, if the donor were to provide major advance funding to the agency, without earmarking funds or other restrictions, it would essentially be ceding all control over those resources to the agent, whose activities would then not be possible to direct or in some cases even observe.

There are organizational as well as financial challenges to be overcome. As already described, humanitarian action involves numerous actors: humanitarian donor agencies of national governments; national military authorities; multinational peacekeeping forces; numerous intergovernmental agencies, many of them affiliated with the United Nations; and an ever large number of NGOs who act as the primary implementing agencies of many relief interventions. The result is a situation with many fairly independent actors each providing an essential contribution, but individually incapable of addressing the multidimensional repercussions of humanitarian emergencies. These actors often fail to coordinate their efforts and have been constrained in developing collective solutions. Even in cases where field coordination has been relatively good, joint strategic and contingency planning has been lacking. In addition, the often fierce competition among NGOs for funds creates obstacles to coordination.

One important challenge facing the international humanitarian community today, therefore, is how to structure new funding arrangements which would allow for preparedness and encourage coordination, yet still maintain donor discretion and healthy levels of professional competition among the humanitarian agencies. This may be achieved by building on a few recent, demonstrably successful funding innovations.

The arrangements reviewed below are divided into two principal types: those that facilitate a rapid response (6.1.1), and those that directly support preparedness capacity (6.1.2). A brief illustration of these arrangements is useful as an introduction to Section 6.2, which suggests a framework for exploring ways to address the preparedness challenge facing agencies.

6.1.1 Rapid Response Mechanisms

As evidenced in the case studies, when agencies rely on donor contracts they cannot respond rapidly to humanitarian needs. The following arrangements illustrate some encouraging developments that are designed to overcome this limitation.

- Letter of Intent: Some donors give advance notice to NGOs indicating their interest and likelihood that their proposal will be accepted. Once this letter is received, some NGOs may draw on their reserves on the expectation that funding will follow. The innovation here is that response time is reduced by weeks (and sometimes months). The letter of intent, however, is a notice - not a contract. If an NGO acts on it, they assume the risk that the final contract might not be forthcoming.

- OFDA's Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs): The DART represents a move toward a more responsive humanitarian donor agency. The teams are deployed in acute emergency situations to conduct needs assessments, and are authorized to approve unsolicited NGO proposals more or less immediately. This method bypasses the proposal review process which takes place in Washington D.C. and takes on average four to six weeks after receipt of the proposal. [20](#)

- Indefinite Quantities Contract (IQC) [21](#) : In 1996 OFDA requested proposals from organizations that had rapid response capacities in various fields for an IQC tender. IRC, CARE and International Medical Corp were chosen as the lead consortium for the Water, Sanitation, Health and Nutrition IQC. The intent was that OFDA would trigger this IQC in the event an emergency

erupted where no US NGO was working. OFDA would then underwrite the consortium's cost of launching an operation. As part of the agreement, the consortium guaranteed to retain fifteen emergency response specialists who could be deployed within 72 hours. The IQC still requires the consortium to develop a proposal on a crisis-by-crisis basis, even though its expertise in this area had secured the IQC bid in the first place. The arrangement highlights the need to work out a collaborative arrangement in advance of a crisis to overcome contract delays. Moreover, the IQC would eliminate the financial risk — if not the initial burden - shouldered by agencies in starting up an operation. Yet while OFDA has triggered the IQC four times, the consortium has not been awarded a contract.

- State Department, Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) Memorandum of Understanding with IRC. Under this MOU, the BPRM agreed to earmark \$500,000 dollars for IRC to draw on for initial response. IRC has to submit a project proposal to access the funds but BPRM would reply within five days and the money would be immediately available.

- OCHA's Trust Fund for Disaster Relief Assistance: Established in 1995, the Trust Fund is an unearmarked financing mechanism for relief operations undertaken by OCHA, UN Offices and Programmes, Specialized Agencies, or NGO's. It is currently funded by Norway, Italy and Japan. Each government decides how their respective contributions are used and by whom. Once the decision is made, OCHA releases the funds without delay.

- Roster agencies: Emergency personnel rosters are commonly used mechanisms that enable agencies to scale up their operative capability quickly. In light of finite up-front funds, it is cost effective for agencies to contract emergency response staff as required. While rosters are a rapid response mechanism they also receive direct support from governments. CANADEM (Canada), Danish Refugee Council (Denmark), Norwegian Refugee Council (Norway), Bioforce (France) and APSO (Ireland) are all directly funded by government agencies. Two UK roster agencies, RedR and International Health Exchange, receive partial government support. This direct support finances emergency training courses which contributes to skill development and enhances the response capacity of the international humanitarian system. The Danish and Norwegian Refugee Councils report an ability to deploy trained emergency personnel within 72 hours. In some circumstances, their governments cover the salaries of their roster personnel if seconded to selected agencies and contribute as well to other operational costs.

6.1.2 Direct Preparedness Support

Direct government support to NGO core budgets is a politically sensitive issue but there is no escaping the fact that donors rely on NGO services. This interdependence has resulted in a few instances where donors provide direct preparedness support.

- Overhead allowances: As a general principle, most donors do not provide NGOs with core budget support. Some donors, however, do account for the risk capital NGOs invest in project delivery and allow them to charge for overheads. There is no donor-wide policy on overheads, and allowances vary from donor to donor. For example, DfID allows 7%, ECHO 6%, the Dutch 4%, and CIDA has recently established an overhead policy of 7.5%. These overhead allowances do not have to be used for project implementation and can be invested in preparedness activities. Unfortunately, the problem is that some are so low that it often does not cover field administration expenses, let alone headquarters costs, or preparedness planning costs - which by necessity are placed far down on the totem pole by NGOs. The major drawback of this mechanism is that the flat overhead allowance rate rewards large capital intensive projects more favorably than labor intensive projects which generally have lower overall costs but have relatively higher overhead costs.

- Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Resources Supplies and Services Agreement with OFDA: CDC is a federal US government agency specializing in primary health and disease prevention. It provides technical assistance to OFDA, multilateral organizations, and NGOs. Recently, OFDA created an earmarked fund that CDC can draw on when OFDA requests its services. This arrangement enables CDC to respond quickly. Unlike the IQC and BPRM's Memorandum of Understanding arrangements, this arrangement does allow for CDC to invest in preparedness. [22](#)

- Danida's Framework Agreement: Denmark's overseas development agency, Danida, established a framework agreement with four development NGOs, all of which had long standing relations with Danida and accounted for a large proportion (60%-70%) of Danida's total development funding for NGOs. Established in 1991, the Framework Agreement is a hybrid between a block grant scheme and the traditional form of project cooperation. The NGOs receive core funding and in return agree to follow guiding principles. [23](#) The main objective of this agreement is to streamline administrative procedures, facilitate a coherent planning approach based on agreed program principles, and strengthen dialogue between Danida and the major NGOs. An external evaluation of this arrangement was favorable, commenting that it "enabled the NGOs to make long-term planning in respect of project activities, organizational changes and staff development." [25](#) Similar arrangements in the humanitarian field have been established with the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils.

These arrangements providing for direct preparedness support and facilitating rapid response represent encouraging developments in the way resources for humanitarian assistance are allocated. Conceptually, they represent a move away from an ad hoc, voluntary approach to international humanitarian action and toward a more efficient and professional system.

6.2 Toward a More Rational Model of Preparedness

The purpose of this report is to provide a framework for discussion and point to possible directions for action by the major players in humanitarian assistance.

In exploring means for enhancing the preparedness capacity of the key humanitarian implementors (NGOs and international agencies), the underlying assumption made here is that quality and effectiveness in humanitarian service delivery is best served by maintaining the following features of these implementors:

- Non-profit status
- Operational independence
- Professionalism (including adherence to internationally recognized programming standards and best practices)
- Competitiveness in fund-raising
- Collaboration in operations (implying complete transparency and coordination with other agencies once on the ground)

While the features of "competitiveness" and "collaboration" may seem at first glance contradictory, experience has shown that competition among NGOs can have a beneficial effect on the quality of programs proposed, and only becomes harmful when agencies are forced into exaggerated competition amongst themselves for donor funding. It is within the control of the donor community to maintain a positive degree of competition among agencies prior to emergencies and to foster constructive collaboration in the post-onset emergency stage. This will be discussed in more detail below.

The proposed framework for enhancing preparedness proceeds from the above assumptions and seeks to build on the recent innovations described in the previous section. It therefore takes a three-pronged approach: 1) building preparedness capacity *a priori*; 2) removing obstacles to rapid response; and 3) facilitating collaboration in the field.

1. Building preparedness capacity

The first and most important area on which to focus attention is enabling the humanitarian assistance agencies to build their individual preparedness capacities. The efforts of UNHCR, Oxfam and IRC in this regard may be among the most advanced within the humanitarian community, yet by their own admission still fall far short of what is required. The modalities described in section 6.1.2, "Direct Preparedness Support," can be seen as a starting point in this regard. One possibility could be to amend grant proposal formats to create an additional indirect cost allowance line; a small percentage in addition to and discrete from the overhead costs allowance to be used specifically for preparedness activities. In such grant proposals donors could require NGOs to describe the measures to be taken to increase their preparedness capacity for future emergencies (much the same way certain donors currently require NGOs to include a section in their proposals on how their emergency activities will transition to longer term development objectives.)

As a second possibility, though it may be seen as outside funding mandates, donors could solicit proposals for grants specifically for building preparedness capacity within an agency. NGOs applying for such a grant would be required to demonstrate previous experience in rapid response and describe how they would use the grant to enhance their capabilities for launching an immediate intervention in future emergencies, thereby allowing them to be on the ground and operational by the time donors begin their emergency funding response.

Additionally, earmarked start-up funds (such as CDC's Resource Supplies and Services Agreement with OFDA) could possibly be made available to those NGOs with whom donors have established a favorable track record, and who donors would like to see among the "first on the scene" of an emergency.

Finally, the issue of block grants, under which NGOs have prior authorization to undertake programming at their discretion within agreed parameters, could be revisited. While understandably favored by NGOs, the use of block grants is problematic to donors who prefer to exercise tighter control on the activities of their grantees. It would behoove both donors and their implementing partners to engage in discussions on the subject, to identify the specific difficulties with this mechanism and how to resolve them.

2. Removing obstacles to rapid response

Complementing the effort to create internal preparedness capacity, measures could also be taken to improve the deficiencies of the initial response phase. What is required is simply quick approval and turnaround of grant funds in order to avoid gaps in funding and delays in service delivery.

OFDA has shortened the grant approval process by decentralizing decision making. Emergency response proposals are in certain instances reviewed and approved by their representatives in the field, rather than being referred to headquarters, it shaving weeks off the initial start-up time. Those donors that already give quick approvals need to devise ways to ensure that the money follows quickly thereafter, as many NGOs do not possess the cash assets to front the costs of initial response.

Again, block funding should be considered for use in the post-onset phase as well, as a way to cut down on the time delays involved in releasing funds. The IQC remains an intriguing innovation. It would be useful to examine why it has not been used more frequently and to greater effect, and what changes would need to be made in order to make it a more effective rapid response arrangement.

3. Facilitating collaboration in the field

While seemingly tangential to the subject of preparedness, problems of coordination and collaboration among agencies in the field are in fact directly related to current funding practices and exacerbated by the lack of preparedness. It is a scene replayed over and over, particularly in large-scale well-publicized emergency situations: the affected area is suddenly overrun with agencies scrambling for operational roles and funding (not to mention office space and local staff). Often it is weeks before the overwhelming majority of these agencies are able to begin any concrete interventions, and in the interim period their sheer numbers make planning and coordination difficult, and the negative competition that is fostered among them leads to both duplication and gaps in services.

Many of the above suggestions, if implemented, would serve to mitigate the "gold rush" phenomenon, and there are additional steps that can be taken as well. In emergency situations, the major donors could agree on - and adhere to - the principle that only those NGOs already operational on the ground would be invited to apply for funding. When additional agencies are needed, their numbers could be limited by giving priority to those with proven emergency response expertise and the ability to mobilize rapidly. Further, donors could require a certain amount of prior coordination and rationalization of activities among the NGOs from which they are receiving funding requests.

To conclude, this report has highlighted the preparedness challenges of agencies and the opportunities for enhancing effective action. The arrangements that provide direct support and facilitate rapid response seek to overcome the shortcomings of a voluntary system by introducing pre-arranged and predictable support to operational agencies. As the principals in the humanitarian assistance delivery relationship, the donors are key to any solution to the preparedness problem. A great deal depends on donor acknowledgement of this role and their openness to new ideas and modalities. A donor-NGO conference, bringing in bilateral and multilateral donors and their implementing partners, could be a productive first step toward developing concrete measures to tackle the preparedness problem.

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Endnotes

[2](#) This report was prepared on the basis of a commissioned report by Lester Salamon, Rikki Abzug and Andrew Crook. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect their opinions.

[3](#) "Resources for Humanitarian Assistance" meeting held at Pocantico, New York, September 11-12, 1997.

[4](#) Hallam distinguishes between the two in the following way: "Cost-efficiency analysis investigates the process of aid delivery rather than the outcome of such activities. Cost-efficiency analysis represents a limited form of cost-effectiveness analysis, in the sense that efficiency is only a necessary and not a sufficient condition for effectiveness." [1996:28].

[5](#) The two other reports in this project, "Building Regional and National Capacities for Leadership in Humanitarian Assistance" and "Regional Burden-Sharing for Humanitarian Action" focus on the question of national and regional capacity development in the South.

[6](#) CDC [1992].

[7](#) Joint Evaluation [1996:69].

[8](#) UN [1995: 17].

[9](#) One informed UN official estimated that this represents 95% of total UN resources for initial response.

[10](#) The 1995 report of the High Commissioner to ECOSOC provides a progress report on these activities, particularly UNHCR's efforts to maintain and improve established standby arrangements [E/1995/52, para. 42-47].

[11](#) As a last resort, UNHCR can also call on so-called "Government Service Packages" (GSPs) which are a specific civil or defense asset mobilized and delivered by a donor country.

[12](#) UNHCR [1996].

[13](#) Oxfam has developed widely used emergency equipment. Its Water Packs, for example, co-developed with Imperial College and Surrey University were first tested in 1982. Since then they have been used in every major emergency.

[14](#) Oxfam's investment in and innovations on water delivery systems, water testing kits, sanitation and shelter packs are now industry standard and used by ICRC, UNICEF, and UNHCR. Oxfam increased the Catastrophe Fund to 4 million pounds sterling (FY 1999) from 3 million pounds sterling (FY 1998).

[15](#) The other one third represents ongoing emergency programs Oxfam operates in Southern Sudan, Great Lakes and Bangladesh. They are funded from restricted funds raised through public appeals.

[16](#) Joint Evaluation [1996:70].

[17](#) FEMA [1999].

[18](#) Joint Evaluation [1996:114].

[19](#) Military costs vary depending on whether the participating military decides to charge for or donate their services.

[20](#) USAID [1998:5].

[21](#) USAID defines an IQC as a type of contract that "provides for the furnishing of indefinite quantities, within established minimum or maximum limits, of supplies and services during the contract period. Task orders are placed as requirements for supplies or services arise. Such contracts are funded to provide that a maximum quantity of supplies and services will be ordered."

[22](#) CDC [1996a].

[23](#) The Framework Agreement comprises the following main elements: 1) a policy statement from the NGO outlining the mandate and the general principles for providing technical assistance; 2) a perennial agreement between the Danida and the NGO describing the conditions for funding activities and the administration of the Agreement; 3) annual activity plans covering brief descriptions of all planned projects; 4) annual appropriations and indicative figures for the following 3 years; and 5) annual status reports outlining general experience gained and brief reports on status for all projects [DanEduc 1994].

[25](#) DanEduc [1994].