

EMERGENCY RELIEF – NEXT STEPS

**ASIA CONSULTATION
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The purpose of this short paper is to bring together the results of consultations about emergency relief at earlier consultations, and provide a basis for our discussions on the way forward.

1. Introduction

Relief is one of the three pillars of the Alliance work and during the regional consultations we have tried to formulate some contours of the strategy that we will take forward. One important consideration is that this stream is complex and requires a lot of reflection since the humanitarian field has grown in the last decades incorporating numerous actors and themes. It also requires flexibility, due to the changing characteristics of the emergencies that we have to face (many of them linked to climate change), and also due to the distinctiveness of each situation.

Relief was first discussed at the Nairobi consultation. The results were taking for further examination to the Sao Paulo Consultation where some decisions were adopted or confirmed. This paper brings together the outcomes from all the consultations and looks at a way forward.

2. MANDATE FOR RELIEF

Mandate for the Anglican Alliance: to bring together the emergency relief work across the Anglican community, working with churches and agencies to develop a long term strategy that will:

- Improve the global response across the Anglican Communion to emergencies caused by natural disasters or through human actions.
- Add value to and coordinate more effectively the work of Anglican agencies and churches.
- Work on specific focal points which are of special concern for members of the Anglican Communion

3. MODES OF WORKING

Website: this is an important tool that will be used to:

- Inform the Anglican Communion about major emergencies affecting communities served by Anglican churches and agencies, the measures that have been taken to deal with the situation, and how churches, agencies and individuals can contribute to the relief work.
- Highlight less prominent emergencies. Many emergencies do not get attention by the media and consequently they do not get the help they need. Through the website we will inform about their situation and publicised them.

- Appeals by churches and agencies. The website will include a page to show the appeals made by churches and direct links to the appeals made by the agencies. The Alliance publicises appeals and work by both churches and agencies with commenting on, or prioritising them. It also provides a space controlled by the agencies to publicise their relief work.
- Unfolding emergencies. Situations such as the gradual deterioration of the coastal areas in the Pacific islands that dramatically affects Anglican communities will be the focus of special notes or reports. The aim is to maintain the attention and concern over these spots and remain the public about the seriousness and possible worsening of these calamities.
- Highlighting and sharing best practice in the areas of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery to contribute to capacity building across the Communion.

Virtual conferences:

This tool virtually brings together various actors involved in relief work within the Anglican Communion during a particular emergency. It is useful because connects people working remotely and can be complemented with telephone conference. This instrument was used during the earthquake in Japan and provided an important platform to examine the possibility of an intervention and the kind of support that would be offered. The virtual conference will be mostly utilised for major tragedies.

Relations with international relief agencies

There are multiple actors that intervene during an emergency. The first responsibility is on the state. When the situation overcomes the ability of authorities, the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is the entity in charge of organising the intervention. ACT Alliance is the agency that brings together many church entities in relief work. We must look at co-ordination with OCHA , Act Alliance and other international organisations in order to get better results in the relief effort. Next year further networking work will be undertaken.

Role of regional facilitators

By mid-2012 it is expected that there will be four regional facilitators for the Anglican Alliance. Their role in relief will be essential since they will be in better position of knowing the reality of emergency situations in their region. They are also an important contact point since they know the culture and language which might encourage local churches to easily report calamities.

In future, the facilitators will be able to collect information about experiences and best practices of the churches when dealing with emergencies.

Meeting with Agencies – preparedness

In addition to highlighting good practices and gathering available materials as it was mentioned above, the Alliance is planning to hold a formal meeting with the agencies to examine this theme and

DISCUSSION POINT: Are there other modes of working for the Anglican Alliance in relation to emergency relief? How should the Anglican Alliance work with a) Churches and b) Agencies in the area of emergency relief?

look at ways forward. In the meantime, we will continue actively supporting initiatives such as the preparedness toolkit that is being developed by ER&D in partnership with ABM.

4. FOCAL POINTS FOR ACTION

The focal points are areas of especial concern for the members of the Anglican Communion that have emerged in the consultations throughout the different workshops. Now we are exploring the best way to engage with these priorities. In this section we are to point them out and explain the underpinning idea.

Database

The aim is to progressively compile a database of church assets that can be deployed in an emergency. This includes skilled people able to assist in an emergency, buildings such as churches and schools that can be used as evacuation or distribution centres, and institutions such as hospitals and clinics that can provide services. This process has not been initiated yet, and will take some time to develop.

Disability

The consultations in Nairobi and Sao Paolo Consultation prioritised providing support in emergencies for people with disabilities or other special needs. This includes persons whose disability is a consequence of the disaster. To address this worry we are contacting experts in the area of disability to provide us with an appropriate perspective in this area in order to examine ways ahead. In the meantime this will be a cross-cutting theme in all our relief and development work.

Gender violence

This focal point emerged in Sao Paolo and was the result of discussion about the vulnerability of women during and after an emergency strikes, in particular the susceptibility to gender violence during conflict when women have to abandon their houses or live within refugee camps.

Psychosocial support

Resilience from within the hurting community and compassion toward it is an element of the utmost importance given the fragile state of the victims. The church is already strong in providing psychosocial support, therefore the main objective of this focal point is to develop and reinforce this expertise.

DISCUSSION POINT: How should the Anglican Alliance take forward work in these priority areas? What expertise does the Church and its agencies have in these areas?