ANGLICAN ALLIANCE
Development · Relief · Advocacy

ANGLICAN ALLIANCE CONSULATION

Sao Paolo 2- 6 of October 2011

RELIEF STRATEGY – WAYS FORWARD

1. Introduction

This paper takes forward the discussion that started at the Nairobi consultation in April of this year on the relief strategy for the Anglican Alliance. It builds on the discussions there and the experience since then of responding to the needs of communities affected by disasters, and sets out some of the

> **The purpose of this paper is to set out some of the challenges in providing relief for communities affected by disasters – either natural or conflict-related – so that Anglican churches and agencies working together can discuss ways forward.**

key questions that need to be explored. This paper examines a range of disasters, identifying the main challenges involved. It analyses the role of the church in emergencies and the support it can provide. Finally, it takes forward the debate on the relief strategy of the Alliance. Our mandate clearly establishes the need of bringing together the relief work of the Anglican Communion and of developing appropriate mechanism for a collaborative response.

Issues for debate include:

- The role of Churches and church assets such as schools and clinics
- Publication of appeals by Anglican Alliance
- Co-ordination between agencies
- Relationship with ACT Alliance
- Relationship with international humanitarian agencies
- Specialist role for the church, such as provision of psycho-social services and support for people with disabilities.

2. Nairobi decisions

The Nairobi paper, which is attached to this for reference, dealt with:

- Basic notions about natural disasters
- Components of disaster management with particular emphasis on preparedness and response
- The cluster approach adopted by OCHA
- The work of some of the Anglican Agencies on relief and some operational difficulties that arise when managing disaster response.

The debate in Nairobi reached some consensus on the way forward on relief. In particular it was agreed that:

- The Anglican Alliance should respond to all emergencies in all countries, regardless of whether they were high or low income, and whether the emergency was caused by a natural disaster or by conflict, with assistance provided on an unconditional basis to all people in the communities in need. The response should be determined by the intensity of the loss, the scale of the impact, the assessment of need and the views of the local church.
- The trigger for the Anglican Alliance's response should be the declaration by the national government of a national emergency.
- The emphasis for the Anglican Alliance should be networking with NGOs, building capacity and disaster preparedness, including developing an early warning system for conflict related

disasters. The importance of lesson learning was stressed, eg rebuilding techniques post disasters.

- The Alliance would support existing appeals – the Alliance will not be a funding mechanism.
- Advocacy should be an important tool during disasters.
- Consideration should be given to holding a register of people who could respond to emergencies.
- Consideration should be given to focussing on the needs of disabled people, and on providing a specialist service, such as psycho-social counselling.
- More discussion was needed on the relationship with agencies such as ACT Alliance, local churches and international humanitarian agencies.
- The role of minority churches was important and needed to be supported.

3. **Complex emergencies**

Many of the emergencies which affect Anglican communities are complex, and we need to consider how we respond to these. According to The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the handbook published in 1994, a complex emergency is a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing United Nations country program.' These are characterized by: extensive violence and loss of life; massive displacements of people; widespread damage to societies and economies; the need for large-scale, multi-faceted humanitarian assistance; the hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints; significant security risks for humanitarian relief workers.

However, this definition has been criticised in that many crises are not unforeseen. They may be more "an accumulation of several factors and triggers that have been building up for a long time"[1]

OCHA has differentiated complex emergencies and natural disasters, and makes the following points:

- The effects of climate change are dramatically impacting on many parts of the world putting more pressure on scarce resources and exacerbating ongoing conflicts
- There are situations such as famine that not only are the result of natural conditions but also responses to market forces and poverty or even to political strategy (withholding of food to starve or diminish opponents):
- Behind many humanitarian emergencies it is common to find political agendas that play a role in the development of the crisis.

Despite the criticism, the concept of "complex emergencies" provides us with a notion of difficulty and intricacy that might helps us to acknowledge the scale of the situation that we have to deal with. In the following section we will examine the challenges of humanitarian relief.

3. **Challenges of humanitarian relief**

> ➢ Funding and accountability of donor activity

There are problems of the adequacy and accountability of funding both at global and local level. Despite efforts to register donations and the issuing of global appeals, there is no uniform recording of resources provided for a particular crisis. Pledges may be made, but never materialise, and many global appeals go unfunded: most notably the appeal for the Horn of Africa famine. At local and

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[1] This information was taken from the book written by Tim Allen. Chapter 1: What are complex emergencies?

national level the difficulty of accounting for funds in an emergency situation has been the cause of dissent.

➢ Political agendas

These considerations are always present since governments pursue foreign policy interests and security objectives and international agencies seek to increase their visibility to sustain their funding. This may also distort the allocation of aid.

➢ Short-term deployment

In some cases the short term interventions of international actors, setting up administrations and delivery mechanisms, can undermine local structures. These administrations and the services they deliver may not be maintained. This reinforces the role of the church when responding to emergencies. Churches are in place before the emergency starts and also continue to exist long after the world's attention has been diverted to another crisis.

➢ Aid that sustains the emergency "the moral hazard"

This is a serious issue for humanitarian relief. In some circumstances, in order to gain access to communities in crisis, aid agencies have to negotiate with the organizations that are causing the harm. As a result, humanitarian assistance may end up supporting the activities of armed groups or maintaining an unacceptable situation. For example, there were profound debates about the political impact of food aid in Zimbabwe during the drought, and aid agencies are currently having to negotiate with Al-Shabab for humanitarian access in Somalia. This presents a serious moral hazard.

➢ Military forces involvement

Humanitarian intervention, involving the deployment of foreign military forces sometimes delivering also delivering humanitarian supplies, can lead to confusion in local communities about the role of aid workers and the military, making the former a military target.

➢ A deadly Lottery

Michael Fleshman introduces this concept to discuss the role of the media. On the one hand, media coverage is important to encourage contributions. However, not all emergencies attract media coverage, however great the needs of local communities. The Anglican Alliance can help alert people to emergencies that are neglected by the media and ignored by the wider public.

As Anglicans, our churches and agencies responding to the victims of emergencies have to deal with these challenges. The following section examines some of the strengths of churches in these difficult situations.

4. The churches

Churches are often best placed to deal with emergencies since they are already on the ground, have community leadership; constitute a point of reference and can co-ordinate the preparedness and response efforts. In the previous paper for the Nairobi conference some elements for the preparedness stage were discussed. These included: education (awareness about the exposure to the hazard); behaviour (before, during, and after the disaster); and warning (see the example of the church in the Caribbean).

Preparedness has to be implemented at all levels. However, it is especially important it is implemented at community level, and that it should incorporate local realities, include indigenous coping mechanism and work with the perception of risk. It is important that contingency planning

should be seen as a continuing process, rather than as one-off exercise, and that the plans should not be constructed in isolation, but should be linked to national preparedness procedures or United Nations programmes. One possibility might be to include preparedness and risk reductions plans into broader development plans of poverty.

Responding to disaster was also analysed in Nairobi, where we examined the cluster approach developed by OCHA (see Nairobi paper for further information). Therefore, various initiatives have been developed to reinforce the capabilities of the church in facing disasters. Tearfund has identified 7 distinctive strengths of the church that can be used when a disaster strikes:

1. Responding immediately to disasters:
The local church is already present when a disaster suddenly strikes, so it can help the community immediately. The Church might act as an emergency shelter or an emergency food store.

3. Providing compassion and care:
The church recognises that people have spiritual and emotional needs and should be treated with dignity; sadly, aid organisations do not always do this.
The church can provide funerals and burials and pass on the message of God's love and hope for the future. Prayer is also a key contribution, both for those who have suffered in the disaster and for aid workers who are experiencing high levels of stress and emotional pressure.

4. Influencing and shaping values:
People are often more vulnerable to hazards because of cultural values and beliefs. For example, societies which give little value to women may not take enough action to care for them in times of crisis. The local church can address this type of issue – everyone has value in God's sight and should be treated equally, whatever their background or beliefs.

2. Providing resources:
The local church has assets and resources which it can use in disaster situations. People are a key resource and can be mobilised into a willing body of volunteers, motivated by love and compassion and trained in skills appropriate to the situation. Key Church professionals can also provide much needed expertise: for example teachers at church schools know local families, including those in greatest need.   Church buildings are invaluable assets. Church bells can be part of an early warning system. As congregations meet regularly it is possible to communicate messages to a significant number of people.

5. Acting as a community peacemaker:
In many communities the church naturally sees its role as reconciling and peacemaking. It can help to prevent future violence by assisting people to find solutions to long-standing arguments and promoting forgiveness past wrongs. It can help to resolve conflict by setting up small groups to look at the causes of the disputes and begin to address them. The church is often present on both sides in an ethnic conflict and therefore is in a strong position to help restore peace. In natural disasters the same principles apply, with the church able to challenge selfishness and competition over scarce resources. Justice, impartiality and forgiveness are important principles in such contexts, and the church can uphold them.

6. Facilitating community action
The local church, through its relationships in the community, its credibility and its leadership, can help to bring people together and organise them for action – both before and after a crisis. This applies not only to sudden disasters, but also to the creeping, slow-moving disasters of drought and famine.
Example: The church in Ruaha, Tanzania, organised its community to carry out community-managed targeting and distribution of emergency response materials so that the poorest people received assistance.

7. Advocating on behalf of poor and marginalised people
In a disaster situation, the church can be an advocate on behalf of poor and marginalised people – for example, by ensuring that these people receive relief goods. The church can check that help is indeed reaching the most vulnerable people in the community. In many communities, church leaders are respected and have some influence. The church's wider networks are an additional strength, because they enable it to carry out advocacy at a number of levels – for example, by passing on information to national church offices.

> **Which other strengths do churches uniquely have that can be used during emergencies? How should these best be mobilised?**

These strengths of the church are crucially important when protecting the most vulnerable people. One such group is people with disabilities, and the next section deals with the difficulties they face.

5. People with disabilities

According to the World Health Organization, about 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, of whom 2-4% experience significant difficulties in functioning. Furthermore, this segment is growing because populations are ageing – older people have a higher risk of disability – and because of the global increase in chronic health conditions associated with disability, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mental illness. In addition a substantial number of people involved in emergencies are disabled by them, with particular emergencies resulting in particular types of disabilities.

The difficulties facing people with disabilities in being able to participate in preparation for disasters, or in responding to them, are well documented by Shivji, Aleema in "Disability in displacement" among others. If the situation is already difficult for this population, their circumstances get worse during emergencies. They may be neglected and left behind because they might need assistance to move or they cannot call for help. Also discrimination makes their access to help very hard. Some humanitarian actors believe that even if they want to help they do not have the necessary expertise. Aleema Shibji mentions the difficulties but also provides various examples of how relief can be provided with dignity and respect for people with disabilities:

Difficulties	Remedies
• *Sight, hearing and understanding impairment may prevent individuals from be aware of warning system, disorientate them and lead to their separation from their family or carer.* • *Separation might bring further hazards since the person might be dependent on the carer for eating, moving or tolerating.*	• In areas with recurrent displacement, identify and make a list of persons with disabilities plus any special needs they may have. • Following flight, prioritise persons with disabilities in reunification efforts, particularly those dependent on caregivers.

- *Disability equipment such as wheelchairs may be left behind.*
- *During conflict, people with disabilities might be interrogated as they can be confused with combatants (males with amputations)*
- *Refugee camps are hastily erected and may not have disability aids.*
- *Escape and access routes may be especially difficult for people with impaired mobility.*
- *Food rations might be unsuitable – goods for general distribution often do not take account of special needs.*
- *People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological violence.*

- Ensure simple disability questions are included in rapid assessments.
- House persons with disabilities and their families close to essential services and facilities
- Provide all information in simple language, using at least two means of communication (oral and written) and ensuring it reaches people who cannot leave their shelters/temporary homes.
- Include persons with disabilities in cash- and food-for-work and other livelihood recovery schemes or provide suitable alternatives.
- Provide protection from abuse.

Bearing in mind these notions about humanitarian relief and the church's role, it is important that we focus now on the relief strategy of the Alliance.

6. Our relief approach

When and how to respond

Participants at Nairobi decided that the Anglican Alliance should respond to all emergencies. Modes of doing this could be:

- Use of the Anglican Alliance website to promote appeals. Further consideration is needed as to which appeals should be promoted, and the degree of diligence that the Alliance should exercise before posting an appeal. There is an expectation that appeals by churches from communities struck by disasters should be supported, regardless of how well organised the appeals might be.
- Each Anglican agency will have its own page on the Anglican Alliance website to promote its appeals.
- A virtual conference to bring together churches and agencies involved in emergencies - some guidelines are needed as to the point at which this would be triggered.
- It is especially important that the Anglican Alliance supports the smaller appeals that do not attract a high level of media attention.

Relations with international relief agencies

Relations with other agencies need to be considered further:

- Co-ordination is needed with the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other partners.
- Some agencies work through the ACT Alliance, and some Anglican Churches are beneficiaries. Other agencies and churches choose to work independently. The Alliance must relate to all.
- These relations may cut across relations with Anglican agencies or churches.

Role of regional facilitators

Regional facilitators will have an important role in identifying emergencies, including providing early warning, and for advocacy to raise the profile of disaster-stricken communities. The role of the Africa facilitator in drawing together the first African faith leaders meeting to consider the East African crisis and press the African Union leaders for action, provides a good example of this.

Focal areas for the Anglican Alliance

Focal points for further strategic work by the Anglican Alliance could include:

- Disaster preparedness, highlighting good practice and available materials and toolkits.
- Compiling of a database of skilled people able to assist in an emergency.
- Support for people with disabilities in emergency situations, including people disabled before and during the emergency. This would involve advocacy work on their behalf to ensure that their needs are given higher priority by relief agencies.
- Development of expertise in providing a specialist service for people affected by emergencies, especially psycho-social support, in which the Church has a considerable level of expertise, already deployed in a number of disasters.

> **Discussion point: In working groups at Sao Paolo, you will be asked to discuss the points above and provide your views on the way forward.**

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