

## **Strengthening humanitarian response through the application of a common standard: The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability**

Submission by HAP International to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Consultations with recommendations for humanitarian stakeholders

*“Extreme challenges force change: we all recognise the need to improve and adapt the humanitarian system to address the challenges that exist today. We must make our work more effective, more efficient and more accountable to affected people. Standards are one of the means to this end [...] [T]he Core Humanitarian Standard is a tremendous accomplishment for the humanitarian sector. The initiative has established a clear and focused professional and ethical standard that humanitarian actors agree make up the foundation of our work. The initiative demonstrates the sector’s commitment to quality and accountability.”*

**Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son, Director of the Division for Corporate Programmes, OCHA<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Critical link between effectiveness and quality and accountability**

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International has always held that a humanitarian response is more effective where organisations and their staff are dedicated to improving quality and accountability.<sup>2</sup> By applying accountability principles and related standards, an organisation becomes accountable for the quality of its work to people it aims to assist and on whose behalf it is acting.

The principle of informed consent is at the heart of HAP’s accountability work, meaning that people affected by crisis should be enabled to agree to an action undertaken on their behalf based on a clear understanding of the facts, implications and consequences of the action. Having promoted and supported the implementation of accountability principles and standards for more than 10 years, HAP is convinced that the adoption and implementation of a Standard on Quality and Accountability “offers a clear and compelling way in which the principle of informed consent can be translated into practical action”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keynote address at the launch of the CHS Copenhagen outcome conference, 12 December 2014. Conference hosted by DANIDA.

<sup>2</sup> HAP was established in 2003 to promote accountability to people affected by humanitarian crises and was the result of two post-Rwanda projects: the Humanitarian Ombudsman Project (1997) and the Humanitarian Accountability Project (2011). It developed the first international Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management – the so-called “HAP Standard”. HAP has 97 member organisations from across the regions that have adopted and applied the HAP Standard on Accountability and Quality in their work since 2007.

<sup>3</sup> As noted by former HAP Director, Nicholas Stockton, at an MSF conference in Brussels on “Mission Integration, Policy Coherence and Accountability” in Brussels, 2 June 2005.

It is therefore reassuring to hear that at international level, accountability to affected populations is now widely accepted as the “*bedrock upon which all notions of [humanitarian] effectiveness are built.*”<sup>4</sup> In July 2014, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) North and Southeast Asia Regional Consultation further proposed that the 2016 WHS in Istanbul “should consider accountability as a humanitarian principle”.<sup>5</sup> It also noted that “human dignity should be considered as a cross-cutting issue and mainstreamed when developing legal frameworks, humanitarian standards and practices”.<sup>6</sup>

If the international humanitarian response is to become more effective, HAP believes this requires a mind-set change in how individuals and organisations approach a humanitarian response and the delivery of assistance to communities. As one HAP member, Christian Aid, puts it:

*“This requires more accountable disaster governance structures at local, national and international levels, greater awareness of gender and other social dimensions, and better adherence to humanitarian accountability best practice. It requires greater understanding of what accountability and disaster governance structures should look like in different emergency contexts. But it also has implications for how donors ensure their funding is accountable to beneficiaries and how that funding reinforces the appropriate disaster governance structures in different contexts.”*<sup>7</sup>

Such a mind-set can be engendered by faithfully promoting a common standard and using common language and terminology that put at the forefront the dignity, rights and power of the women, men, girls and boys affected by crisis.

The new **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability**, which was launched in Copenhagen on 12 December 2014, has the potential to do just that.<sup>8</sup> It has a people-centred focus with the affected people at its core and the commitments have been deliberately written with them in mind. It essentially delineates effective and responsive humanitarian action for communities and people affected by crisis, and shapes the action and approaches of the staff and organisations involved in any response. It can help organisations design, implement, assess, improve and recognise quality and accountability in assistance and programmes by outlining the policies, processes, procedures and practices that an organisation needs if it is to deliver quality assistance while at the same time being accountable to communities and people affected by crisis.

The CHS reflects the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP); many of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles; and the OECD DAC criteria for evaluating programmes. The CHS therefore can be used as a tool not just by NGOs, but by governments, the UN, donors and other humanitarian actors as a powerful tool for change in support of the widespread achievement of greater humanitarian effectiveness.

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<sup>4</sup> OCHA (2013) Report on “Consultative Workshop on Humanitarian Effectiveness”, 21 March 2013, page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, Closing Remarks at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Regional Consultation for North and Southeast Asia, Tokyo, Japan: 24 July 2014.

<sup>6</sup> WHS North and South East Asia, Tokyo Consultation Report, 23-24 July 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Christian Aid (2014), “Making the World Humanitarian Summit worth the climb”, December 2014.

<sup>8</sup> The HAP Board has agreed that HAP replace the HAP Standard with the CHS from 1 January 2015.

## 2. The Core Humanitarian Standard as a common reference framework

As a direct result of the Joint Standards initiative (JSI),<sup>9</sup> and in an effort to harmonise standards, the boards of HAP, People In Aid and the Sphere Project agreed in 2013 to work towards one core standard – the CHS. They were later joined by Groupe URD in this effort.

The CHS is the first response to a call for harmonisation and simplification of standards by more than 2,000 humanitarian actors from across the regions, which were surveyed as part of the JSI in 2013. It addresses the need for more consistent application and greater coherence of standards at one of the most challenging times for humanitarian action.

The CHS represents the culmination of a 12-month, three-stage consultation in Arabic, English, French and Spanish which involved feedback, input and opinion from more than 1,000 individuals and organisations spanning the globe. The consultation also involved a two-month testing phase during which over 60 organisations tested the draft CHS at headquarters and field level. The CHS brings together, and will eventually replace, the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management; the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel; and the Core Standards section of the Sphere Handbook and will also be integrated into the Quality COMPAS reference framework.

Organisations are encouraged to use the CHS as a voluntary standard with which to align their own internal procedures. During the first quarter of 2015, HAP, People In Aid, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD will collectively facilitate, through a consultative process, the development of CHS guidance and indicators to further support the interpretation of each Commitment.

A CHS Verification Framework is being developed which will enable organisations to self-assess their progress in applying the CHS. This framework will be tested during 2015. By mid-2015, organisations will also have an option to have third-party CHS verification and certification through a new, independent certification body.

## 3. Level of commitment to the CHS to date

The CHS has already been acknowledged by many NGOs and UN and donor agencies as a critical tool for improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and for facilitating greater accountability to people and communities affected by crisis.<sup>10</sup> DANIDA points to the CHS as being *“an important platform for communication and mutual learning. Perhaps most importantly, the CHS is a signal that the humanitarian community has moved closer together, with a willingness to cooperate on the basis of some common ground – the CHS,”*<sup>11</sup> while the German Federal Foreign Office in its statement of support highlights the natural link with the WHS, noting that, *“In the summit process and beyond, the Core Humanitarian Standard will ensure the required high standard of principled humanitarian action”*.

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<sup>9</sup> HAP, People In Aid and the Sphere Project, three initiatives that stemmed from the Rwanda crisis, came together in 2011 under the JSI with the common goal of bringing about greater coherence between their respective standards, thereby strengthening aid workers' ability to put these standards into practice. The overall ambition of the initiative was to ultimately improve humanitarian action in favour of communities and people affected by crisis.

<sup>10</sup> See CHS Statements of Support in Annex 1 below, and the Outcome Conference Report on [www.corehumanitarianstandard.org](http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org).

<sup>11</sup> As noted by Morten Jespersen, Under-Secretary for Global Development and Cooperation, DANIDA during his welcome address at the CHS launch conference.

The UK Government acknowledges that the CHS is *“an important tool that the humanitarian sector can use to improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian assistance.”* It further highlights the importance of reviewing how the CHS and verification *“can improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian aid being pursued through the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative in the build up to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016”*. Irish Aid *“requires that all partner humanitarian organisations adhere to best practice and standards and will encourage adoption of the CHS by its partners”*. ECHO acknowledges the fact that *“the commitments reiterate the importance of principled and evidence-based humanitarian programming and the centrality of populations and communities in humanitarian work.”*<sup>12</sup>

The value of reaffirming the humanitarian principles was further welcomed by the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), which acknowledged that: *“We see the CHS has the clear potential to become an influential framework to set out a common set of commitments and expectations for organisations engaged in principled humanitarian action, based on humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence... As CHS progresses further, ICRC remains committed to review its own existing quality and accountability mechanism and to draw out potential improvements and changes based on the current and also future work of CHS.”*<sup>13</sup>

National NGOs in many countries were extremely active in the development of the CHS and have committed to following this up with applying the standard on the ground. The National Humanitarian Network of Pakistan (NHN), for example, has committed: *“To mainstream these standards [the CHS] in Pakistan through its network of about 200 civil society organizations engaged in humanitarian work. We will also translate these standards in local Pakistani languages to make it understandable for network members. NHN will undertake orientation sessions for its network members and other relevant stakeholders so that these standards can be effectively mainstreamed in humanitarian work in Pakistan”*.<sup>14</sup>

COAST Trust in Bangladesh points to the potential for the CHS *“to resolve the growing debate in the development and humanitarian community about organizations’ own accountability to their constituencies and stakeholders and first of all to the communities, they work with”*. Many small, medium and large International NGOs has also committed to adopting the CHS. World Vision International, for example, plans to *“include the CHS in training materials and related programmes. We will use the Standard as a frame of reference for the management of our programmes, our real-time learning processes, and, end of programme evaluations of our humanitarian responses.”*

From the academic world Professor Dorothea Hilhorst, of Wageningen University, well known for her research on the application of the Red Cross and NGO Code of Conduct, *“looks forward to seeing the Standard to start to function as the standard against which aid can be evaluated”* while the capacity development institute, Bioforce, *“considers that the CHS constitutes a relevant initiative towards increased accountability and accountability on humanitarian action and can be used by organizations to improve their standards and processes in an harmonized*

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<sup>12</sup> Statements of support for the Core Humanitarian Standard, ECHO, December 2014,

<http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard/statements-of-support-for-the-core-humanitarian-standard>

<sup>13</sup> Extract from “ICRC position on the occasion of the presentation of the outcome of the SCHR Certification Review Project and the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard in Copenhagen on 12 December 2014”.

<sup>14</sup> In a statement of support submitted by Naseer Memon, Chief Executive, Strengthening Participatory Organisation on behalf of the NHN in December 2014.

*manner. As a capacity building institute, we do intend to use the CHS in our training programs, among other initiatives also dedicated to similar objectives.”*

Many members of HAP and People In Aid are already transitioning from the HAP Standard and the People In Aid Code respectively.<sup>15</sup> Work on guidance is ongoing to make sure that all humanitarian actors have a consistent and full understanding of the Standard and how it should be applied.

#### **4. Evidence of the benefits of applying standards**

Of the more than 2,000 individuals and organisations surveyed as part of the Joint Standards Initiative, 99.8% saw value in applying humanitarian standards in their work.<sup>16</sup> There is a growing body of evidence, albeit much of it anecdotal, that the application of standards improves the quality of programmes and accountability to beneficiaries. There is concrete evidence that open communication, information sharing, engagement and complaints response mechanisms improve accountability to communities and people affected by crisis.

One study on the Impact of Accountability Mechanisms in Kenya and Myanmar revealed that better accountability mechanisms improved the targeting of assistance, the nature of supported interventions and the location of services.<sup>17</sup> They have strengthened trust between agencies and project participants and highlighted the link between community participation and ownership. Community involvement in procurement had increased project efficiency especially where communities had been empowered to monitor contractors.

The JSI consultation noted that focus group discussions of those affected by disasters or conflicts indicated a desire for standards to be shared with populations at the village and sub-village level. The Humanitarian Director of Oxfam GB, Jane Cocking noted on the CHS launch panel, that the beauty of the CHS is that it provides clarity on what communities can expect from humanitarian actors during a response and *“while you may not stick a whole book to a wall, you can easily put the Nine CHS Commitments out there to start the discussion with communities”*.

The JSI consultation further noted that communities were consistently requesting that organisations listen more to them and consult with them at the earlier stages in the aid delivery process. This was echoed in a number of subsequent studies including the Listening Project and in feedback on the Core Humanitarian Standard.

HAP is actively promoting the inclusion of a specific component that focuses on feedback from affected people in the CHS Verification Scheme which will strengthen and validate the degree of impact of humanitarian efforts on the people that it was designed to assist.

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<sup>15</sup> Both entities have a collective membership of approximately 250 organisations.

<sup>16</sup> Joint Standards Initiative Global Stakeholder Consultation Report, April 2013, by Lois Austin and Glenn O’Neil

<sup>17</sup> ‘Improving impact: Do accountability mechanisms deliver results?’ Research funded by Christian Aid, HAP & Save the Children UK, by Andy Featherstone, independent consultant, 2013.

## 5. Challenges to the application of standards

The JSI consultation confirmed that standards were often “heard of” but not necessarily systematically applied due to lack of access to resources and information on “the how to”. It noted that “the need for greater awareness, dissemination and training was the highest priority stated throughout the consultation”. It highlighted the following key challenges in the promotion and uptake of standards:

- Lack of knowledge and inadequate training is the main barrier to implementation of the standards;
- Awareness of the standards is significantly lower among national and smaller NGOs when compared to larger INGOs, the UN or the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
- Lack of systematic presence and uniform support from Quality and Accountability initiative staff in the field is impeding increased implementation.<sup>18</sup>

To address this issue, HAP, together with People In Aid, will provide specialised capacity strengthening services for organisations to enable greater application of the CHS with both organisations promoting the CHS from 1 January 2015. To ensure more effective and efficient use of expertise and resources, HAP and People In Aid will further merge to form a new organisation in 2015 and the CHS will be at the centre of its mission and service provision.<sup>19</sup>

## Recommendations

### To the World Humanitarian Summit

- Consider the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability as a common standard and reference framework for all humanitarian actors at the 2016 WHS in Istanbul to ensure a more systematic and consistently high-quality humanitarian response and greater accountability to communities and people affected by crisis.

### To the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat

- Support the facilitation of the proposal above for consideration by the 2016 WHS in Istanbul.
- Continue to explore and analyse the role that standards play in enhancing humanitarian effectiveness through the WHS Humanitarian Effectiveness Task Team.
- Ensure a stronger link between the work of the Humanitarian Effectiveness Task Team on Standards and those of the other three WHS task teams as standards cut across each theme.
- Ensure that the good work being undertaken by the WHS Advisory Group on Community Engagement leads to the voices of those affected by crisis being heard directly during the consultations and at the 2016 summit.
- Facilitate space for increased dialogue between humanitarian actors from diverse origins and regions around issues related to standards at the 2016 summit.

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<sup>18</sup> Joint Standards Initiative Global Stakeholder Consultation Report, April 2013, Finding 2, 5, 6, 10, page vii, by Lois Austin and Glenn O’Neil.

<sup>19</sup> See the merger announcement and the new organisation’s CHS functions on <http://www.hapinternational.org/news/hap-news.aspx>.

### **To communities and people affected by crisis**

- Use the commitments in the CHS as benchmarks to assess the performance of humanitarian actors in any humanitarian response.
- Provide feedback to humanitarian organisations so they can ensure the assistance they provide best meets community needs.

### **To all humanitarian actors**

- Engage with the CHS and promote and apply it in all humanitarian work.
- Incorporate the CHS as part of an organizational quality and accountability framework.
- Publicly support the principles and commitments enshrined in the CHS, including how each organisation will promote and apply it in its work.
- Monitor organisational progress towards application of the CHS and make public reports on progress.
- Actively promote the CHS in the lead up to, and at, the World Humanitarian Summit.
- Use the CHS as a reference framework for the management of humanitarian programme, learning processes, and evaluations of humanitarian responses.
- Consider external verification of organisational progress in applying the CHS.

### **Governments**

- Provide and enable the delivery of timely and impartial humanitarian action, meeting a state's primary obligation to address urgent humanitarian needs and to protect, as well as be accountable to, people affected by crisis.
- Adopt the CHS principles, commitments and key actions in national disaster response and management policies and strategies and promote the CHS among disaster preparedness and response employees and local, national or international humanitarian organisations operating within their state or territory.

### **United Nations and the IASC**

- Find synergies between the rollout of the Transformative Agenda (TA) protocols and the CHS, using the CHS as a common tool for framing all communications on the three TA pillars, and the accountability pillar in particular.
- Provide support and technical input into the development of the CHS guidance and indicators to ensure complementarity between the standards in the CHS and the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and the IASC Operational Framework for Accountability to Affected Populations.
- Explore innovative ways of ensuring that the CHS is applied at the cluster level to ensure that quality assistance and accountability to affected populations is seen as a cluster responsibility as well as an individual and organisational responsibility.
- Over time, make application of the CHS, and reporting on the CHS, a requirement for all partners accessing funds from UN agencies or through pooled funding mechanisms.
- Include the CHS as the overarching reference framework in policies and strategies related to the humanitarian response.

### **Donors**

- Commit fully to the CHS and support humanitarian partners to apply the CHS.
- Support the dissemination of the CHS across the humanitarian system.
- Include the CHS as the overarching reference framework in policies and strategies related to the humanitarian response.

- Over time, make application of the CHS, and reporting on the CHS, a requirement for all partners accessing funds directly or through pooled funding mechanisms.
- Make provision for funding NGO quality and accountability mechanisms.
- Find innovative funding mechanisms to ensure that national NGOs and national networks have direct access to donor funding so they can fully meet the CHS commitments.
- Allow external verification costs for the CHS for NGOs opting for third party verification or certification.
- Use platforms such as the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment and the Good Humanitarian Donorship Forum in raising further support for the CHS.
- Review how the CHS can be used to support the implementation of many of the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, in particular those that relate to the following GHD principle categories: Objectives and Definition of Humanitarian Action; General Principles; and, Learning and Accountability.

### **Non-Governmental Organisations**

- Apply the CHS across the organisation, from project to headquarters level and ensure all staff are aware of and understand its content and implications for humanitarian action.
- Promote the CHS with peers and partners and strengthen partner capacity to apply it in their work.
- Support and enable communities to advocate for a more accountable and high-quality humanitarian response
- Maintain a programme rather than project approach to accountability to ensure more sustainable accountability mechanisms.

### **Contacts at the HAP Secretariat**

*HAP WHS Focal Person:* David Loquercio, Head of Policy and External Relations, email: [DLOQUERCIO@hapinternational.org](mailto:DLOQUERCIO@hapinternational.org)

*HAP CHS information focal person:* Murray Garrard, Communications Officer, email: [mgarrard@hapinternational.org](mailto:mgarrard@hapinternational.org)

## **Annex 1: Statements of support for the Core Humanitarian Standard<sup>20</sup>** (as of 12 December 2014)

Many individuals, organisations and institutions have expressed their support for the Core Humanitarian Standard since it was launched on 12 December 2014. You can find the comments received to date by scrolling down.

If you would like to express your support, please email [info@corehumanitarianstandard.org](mailto:info@corehumanitarianstandard.org)

**Danida:** Danida commits fully to Core Humanitarian Standard and supports the elaborations of the SCHR's verification and certification initiative. Danida will in close cooperation with its Danish humanitarian partners support the implementation of the CHS in their organisational framework. Danida will also support its Danish partners in the verification and possible certification process. Danida sees the Core Humanitarian Standard as an important tool for improving the overall quality of the humanitarian sector.

**EU/ECHO:** The EU/ECHO welcomes the consolidation of the Common Humanitarian Standards, following intensive work and consultation among key partners. The commitments reiterate the importance of principled and evidence-based humanitarian programming and the centrality of populations and communities in humanitarian work. ECHO supports initiatives that serve an increased professionalization in humanitarian aid and the efficiency of the humanitarian aid system. We highly value the commitment of organisations subscribing to the Common Humanitarian Standards to provide high quality assistance and the determination to be held accountable to that.

**The German Federal Foreign Office:** The German Federal Foreign Office highly welcomes the Core Humanitarian Standard as an essential tool that has been developed at the right time: The massive increase of humanitarian crisis worldwide makes professionalism imperative in humanitarian assistance and emphasizes the urgent need for a sound and solid humanitarian system that is capable of dealing adequately with the growing challenges. Quality and effectiveness are core issues of the World Humanitarian summit. In the summit process and beyond, the Core Humanitarian Standard will ensure the required high standard of principled humanitarian action. At the same time, the Core Humanitarian Standard constitutes a substantial contribution to the Humanitarian Assistance Quality Concept that we are currently developing for the cooperation with our humanitarian partners in Germany. Therefore, we will encourage and support our humanitarian partners in implementing the Core Humanitarian Standard.

**Irish Aid:** Irish Aid has long supported efforts to improve accountability to affected populations and the Irish people when delivering effective, timely and principled humanitarian action. A key component of this engagement has been support to initiatives which enhance professionalism amongst humanitarian actors. Over recent years, Irish Aid has actively supported the Joint Standards Initiative which culminated in the development of the Core Humanitarian Standard. Irish Aid requires that all partner humanitarian organisations adhere to best practice and standards and will encourage adoption of the CHS by our partners. Irish Aid is consulting with partners on how best to support verification and certification on the basis of the outcomes of the ongoing SCHR initiative in 2015.

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<sup>20</sup> This Annex and all new statements of support for the CHS will be posted publically on See CHS Statements of Support in Annex 1 below, and the Outcome Conference Report on [www.corehumanitarianstandard.org](http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org)

**The UK Government:** The UK Government welcomes the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard, an important tool that the humanitarian sector can use to improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian assistance. We appreciate the collaborative effort that has contributed to the Standard to strengthen humanitarian action. The UK also supported the SCHR Certification Review Project. This produced useful findings on the pros and cons of applying a system-wide certification process. The UK would like to thank the Danish Government for hosting this important conference to discuss the Standard. We hope the forum will allow participants to reach agreement on implementation, potential impact and ownership. We also hope that discussion will review how complementary initiatives can improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian aid being pursued through the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative in the build up to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. The UK looks forward to continued engagement with relevant stakeholders in the UK and globally to identify how best we may provide support.

**Mihir Bhatt, Managing Trustee, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute:** The potential value of the new Core Humanitarian Standard is far reaching. On the one hand the standards will improve quality of response by humanitarian system and on the other hand the standards will improve accountability to communities. And jointly both will improve performance of humanitarian system on the ground. As nature of international aid changes worldwide, and so do the aid givers these standards are even more timely for all. It is good to know about that HAP International and People In Aid are joining forces by forming a new organization in 2015. I congratulate you and People In Aid for this merger. Hope the new organization would continue their good work as usual in humanitarian and development sector

**Pauliina Parhiala, Director, ACT Alliance:** As ACT Alliance our mission is to seek transformation which results in full life and dignity to all. In all we do, we mobilise the power within the individuals and communities themselves. Doing this we are accountable to the individuals and communities with whom we work, to each other, to our partners and donors. We want to be held accountable as it builds our relationship with those whom we serve and engage with. As a global alliance of churches and church-related organisations we seek to strengthen quality and accountability and to maximize the impact of all work undertaken by ACT Alliance members, individually and collectively. That is why we will take action to roll out the Core Humanitarian Standard within ACT Alliance. The Core Humanitarian Standard, rooted in the needs and rights of the communities and people affected by crisis and founded in humanitarian principles, will inspire energy and action for improved quality and accountability within the ACT Alliance and beyond.

**ADRA Denmark and the international ADRA network:** ADRA Denmark together with the international ADRA network welcomes the Core Humanitarian Standard. We see it as a unifying tool for improved quality and accountability. ADRA Denmark and the ADRA network are committed to include the standards in our own Country Operation Review for Excellence (CORE), which is an internal certification process. It will have direct influence on our preparedness planning, and other preparation for and involvement in humanitarian responses. ADRA is also committed to follow closely the further development of the certification process, and as it develops to consider if certification is the way forward for ADRA.

**The Bioforce Institute:** The Bioforce Institute considers that the CHS constitutes a relevant initiative towards increased accountability and accountability on Humanitarian action and can be used by organizations to improve their standards and processes in an harmonized manner. As a capacity building Institute, we do intent to use the CHS in our training programs, among other initiatives also dedicated to similar objectives. Recognizing that CHS has been developed

through extensive consultations among the sector, conducted by renowned organizations, we think that the setup through which the process is conducted should be formalized and worded in an explicit manner notably on the relevant websites, including the decision making process through which organizations may participate at various degrees of involvement, thus providing legitimate representation of the professional community. Public information should also include detailed information on the funding process for the standards initiatives. The Bioforce Institute will remain actively engaged on the improvement and convergence of standards, and mindful on the process that will ensure full legitimacy in the Humanitarian community, all the more so as standards will be considered as a step toward forms of recognition or certification in the future of humanitarian organizations.

**Caritas Danmark, Jann Sjørnsen, Secretary General:** Caritas Danmark welcomes the development of the Core Humanitarian Standard and sees it as an important tool to further strengthen quality humanitarian action that is accountable to disaster- and conflict-affected communities.

Caritas Danmark undertakes to implement the Core Humanitarian Standard across its humanitarian policy and programmes.

Caritas Danmark likewise welcomes efforts by SCHR to identify an independent and appropriate model for the verification and eventual certification of organizations committing to the CHS.

**COAST Trust, Bangladesh:** COAST welcomes the CHS as a global standard for humanitarian and development organizations to ensure accountability and quality management in their works and is agreed with its standards. COAST believes CHS can resolve the growing debate in the development and humanitarian community about organizations' own accountability to their constituencies and stakeholders and first of all to the communities, they work with.

Being a HAP-certified organization COAST has in placed policies, procedures for ensuring accountability and quality management in organizational culture. COAST will share CHS and its values to program participants, staffs and stakeholders through outreach activities; leaflets distribution, orientation, feedback workshop etc. COAST will revisit its accountability framework in line with CHS standards through meeting with all level staffs and will consider feedback from program participants and recommendations of CHS guided testing. In final stage COAST will again revisit its framework based on upcoming CHS implementing guidance from CHS authority.

**DanChurchAid, Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen, General Secretary:** Powered by input from humanitarian actors—small and large, and lessons learned from years of humanitarian response where people working with conflict-and disaster impacted communities have demanded simplification of standards, the global humanitarian community has developed a Core Humanitarian Standard which has rights-holders center stage.

DanChurchAid/ACT alliance and its over 140 partners have played our small part in making this happen. We look forward to implementing the Core Humanitarian Standard and will document the improvements in our humanitarian and development work as we use it. We invite the external certification body to test us on our delivery. We can get this right. And must!

**Danish Red Cross:** The Danish Red Cross welcomes the development of the Core Humanitarian Standard. Following the Red Cross Principles and Code of Conduct the Red Cross in Denmark considers the Core Humanitarian Standard as a positive supplement and set of tools to further strengthen quality in humanitarian action that is accountable to disaster- and conflict-affected communities.

**Danish Refugee Council:** Certified against the HAP Standard since 2007, the Danish Refugee Council welcomes the Core Humanitarian Standard, which we hope will enjoy broad and global support. We remain committed to seek trustworthy certification of humanitarian action against the Core Humanitarian Standard.

**Dorothea Hilhorst, Professor of humanitarian aid and reconstruction, Wageningen University, The Netherlands:** The Core Humanitarian Standard is an important step for the humanitarian community, providing a shared and clear vision on issues relating to quality and accountability of humanitarian response. I look forward to seeing the Standard to start to function as the standard against which aid can be evaluated. This is a crucial document which I would recommend to all humanitarian actors, their donors and surrounding networks.

**G. Nayeem Wahra, Founder Convenor, Foundation for Disaster Forum, Bangladesh:** We Foundation for Disaster Forum (FDF) a network of sixty three humanitarian and development agencies working in Bangladesh hails the initiative of drafting the CHS as global standards for humanitarian and development organizations to assure accountability, transparency and value based management and maintaining standards.

Since 2012 FDF along with other national and international humanitarian focused organisation engaged in the consultations process in Bangladesh and actively participated in translating the draft documents and encourage member organisations to take part in Guided Testing of the draft document.

Deep in our heart we do believe that CHS will be able to make a qualitative change in establishing a long lasting but easy to operate system of accountability in humanitarian and development initiatives.

According to its mandate Foundation for Disaster Forum is committed to promote and protect the culture of accountability and quality management with all member and sister organisations. FDF will continue to share the spirit of CHS and its values with all member organisations through all possible means and training workshops.

**Habitat for Humanity International:** Habitat for Humanity International supports the newly created Core Humanitarian Standard, and appreciates the substantial effort of all those who have led the recent revision process. The CHS will provide Habitat, along with all our colleagues in the humanitarian sector, with clear and valuable guidance for how to conduct our work and will help us all improve the lives of those affected by crises. Habitat will work toward achievement of the CHS by integrating it into our training materials, and incorporating it into our internal assessment and evaluation processes. And we look forward to working with beneficiaries, communities, colleagues and funders to fulfill the aspirations of the CHS: to alleviate human suffering and to support the right to life with dignity.

**Humanitarian Initiative Just Relief Aid:** HIJRA recognizes the importance of operating within the framework of internationally accepted standards on humanitarian action. We appreciate the impact that has been achieved through “the Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) in which the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) People In Aid and the Sphere Project joined forces to seek greater coherence and harmonization for users of standards”.

It is a privilege for HIJRA to have been able to participate in the CHS consultative and testing process for Uganda. We feel that the nine commitments of the new standard will not only help participating organizations, including HIJRA, to focus more on their primary stakeholders but

also immeasurably improve the levels of efficiency and effectiveness in global humanitarian response.

HIJRA joins others in applauding the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard, a worthy culmination to a beneficiary-centered global participatory and consultative process.

**Extract from “ICRC position on the occasion of the presentation of the outcome of the SCHR Certification Review Project and the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard in Copenhagen on 12 December 2014**

**...On the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS),**

- ICRC welcomes that the CHS is on the verge of being finalised; we appreciate all the efforts that went into this process, and look forward to its launch in Copenhagen.
- We see the CHS has the clear potential to become an influential framework to set out a common set of commitments and expectations for organisations engaged in principled humanitarian action, based on humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.
- In order to aspire to its potential, we believe that more work is needed on indicators and guidance for organisations to consider integrating it.
- As CHS progresses further, ICRC remains committed to review its own existing quality and accountability mechanism and to draw out potential improvements and changes based on the current and also future work of CHS.”

**Læger uden Grænser (MSF) / Médecins Sans Frontières Denmark:** There is more than ever a need for a humanitarian system, which delivers on its promises, and provides high quality humanitarian assistance. MSF Denmark supports the basic humanitarian principles contained in the Core Humanitarian Standard, which we hope might lift the quality of the humanitarian assistance in the field.

**Mission East:** Mission East welcomes the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) as a step forward for the humanitarian community towards greater clarity and coherence on quality and accountability standards. As a member of HAP, a People in Aid certified organisation and an organisation committed to upholding the SPHERE standards, we will naturally be transitioning towards application of the CHS throughout Mission East and look forward to opportunities for verification. As we seek to assist the most vulnerable, these standards are a vital means of putting these people at the centre of what we do.

**Tearfund, David Bainbridge, International Director:** Tearfund welcomes the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard as a major step forward in bringing greater clarity and coherence to the standards that we seek to apply to our work. We are committed to keeping quality standards, accountability and care for our staff at the centre of our international work. The proliferation of standards in recent years has made it increasingly difficult for our staff and our partners to keep abreast of the requirements and to integrate them into their work. We are pleased to endorse the new CHS which has been trialed and tested by so many organisations, both north and south, and we have committed to early adoption and audit in early 2015.

**Save the Children International, Jasmine Whitbread, CEO, Save the Children International:** “I think this new core humanitarian standard is absolutely spot on. It’s exactly what the sector needs...I’m delighted with what the group has come up with”. See full video commitment of Jasmine Whitbread (also in her role as SCHR Chair) on [www.corehumanitarianstandard.org](http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org).

**Save the Children Denmark:** Save the Children endorses, and is committed to, the Core Humanitarian Standard as a means of improving quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector. This important effort to harmonize and consolidate principles and standards will help affected communities, children, our staff and civil society partners to better understand, ask for and ensure quality and accountability in all humanitarian responses.

**Strengthening Participatory Organisation, Naseer Memon, Chief Executive:** Core Humanitarian Standards are an outcome of a rigorous, inclusive and participatory process spanned over several months. These comprehensive and simple to follow Standards will make it convenient to hold humanitarian work accountable and make it efficient at the same time. With spiralling number and increasing intensity of disasters associated with mindboggling complexity, it is much desirable to have a simple and unified set of humanitarian standards that may supplant various standards currently in vogue.

On behalf of National Humanitarian Network (NHN), I had been closely associated with the process of developing these standards. Once launched, National Humanitarian Network will mainstream these standards in Pakistan through its network of about 200 civil society organizations engaged in humanitarian work. We will also translate these standards in local Pakistani languages to make it understandable for network members. NHN will undertake orientation sessions for its network members and other relevant stakeholders so that these standards can be effectively mainstreamed in humanitarian work in Pakistan.

**World Vision International:** World Vision International (WVI) is deeply committed to inter-agency efforts to strengthen the quality of humanitarian action in favour of the children, their families and communities affected by disasters. For this reason we are active participants in relevant networks, projects and member organisations active in promotion of quality and accountability, such as HAP, People in Aid and SPHERE. WVI feels strongly that efforts to enhance quality in the sector and within individuals agencies should be as practical, simple and impactful as possible. Consequently we are delighted that the CHS is now being launched, and, as an organisation are committed to utilising the standard ourselves, and, promoting it with our peers and partners. WVI would like to express deep appreciation and thanks to the professionals who have worked on this important initiative.

WVI commits to supporting inter-agency work to develop indicators and guidance materials to enable organisational application of the standard. WVI will include the CHS in training materials and related programmes. We will use the Standard as a frame of reference for the management of our programmes, our real-time learning processes, and, end of programme evaluations of our humanitarian responses. WVI is also fully supportive of the external verification of use of the standard and is committing to participation in the certification model and approach proposed through the Certification Review project.