

5. CONCLUSION

Prioritisation is unavoidable for humanitarian donors and agencies. The challenge lies in doing it more ethically and effectively. In this paper we offer a process that is prescriptive, while leaving flexibility for decision-makers to select the choices that are right for them. This process involves:

Scope-setting:

- Define what it means to be affected by crisis and in need.
- Define what, if anything, sets the boundaries around what constitutes a 'humanitarian' service or solution.

Prioritising:

- Define your objectives and use these to identify the different success factors that will be weighed against one another.
- Identify the criteria or a method for determining high-, medium- and low-priority populations, as well as high-, medium- and low-priority services.
- Use a set of ranked principles to clearly establish which objective you will prioritise first (eg reaching high- and medium-priority populations over providing medium-priority services).

In both scope setting and prioritisation, it is essential that humanitarian decision-makers are guided by certain standards.

- **Transparency** around the methods and choices made in scope setting and prioritisation, including clear response objectives and publication of the ranked principles used for priority setting.
- **Clear, specific entry points for integrating community and local actor feedback** into scope setting and prioritisation decisions, with concrete examples. Humanitarian agencies should move beyond blanket statements saying they have 'engaged communities'.
- **Strong inputs from local actors and communities, robust and high-quality data on outcomes, and continuous monitoring of response implementation** to enable ethical and principled resource allocation. These functions are all under threat in an era of constrained resources and need deliberate, intentional support.
- **Real effort to coordinate and complement the work of others**, including development actors, rather than lip service. This will ensure maximum effectiveness and best use of comparative advantage.