Evaluation of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs -
Subprogramme 2: Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response

23 May 2023

Assignment No IED-23-004

OIOS
Office of Internal Oversight Services

INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function

"The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;" ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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Summary

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is responsible for ensuring the timely, coherent, coordinated and principled response of the international community to natural disasters and complex emergencies and for facilitating the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and sustainable development. The primary function of OCHA is its lead role in the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) assessed the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of subprogramme 2: Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response, implemented by all OCHA Divisions. Specifically, OIOS assessed the work of the Operations and Advocacy Division with a focus on the country-level operations, during the period from 2019 to 2021.

OCHA country-level operations added unique value by supporting Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordination Teams. Country offices were considered relevant and responsive to a diverse set of stakeholders who supported humanitarian response.

Country offices contributed toward meeting the humanitarian needs of affected populations and supported strengthened coordination of humanitarian responses despite multiple challenges. Information management services, Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans were effective tools to raise situational awareness and supported response planning, advocacy, and resource mobilization. While advocacy and stakeholder liaison work were critical to strengthening principled humanitarian action and ensuring access and security for humanitarian actors, some stakeholders expressed concerns over data quality assurance and the heaviness of some processes.

Country-based Pooled Funds filled gaps in response delivery, served as catalysts for overall coordination, and were a key mechanism to promote localization efforts. Some issues were raised regarding efficiency and transparency. In these areas as well as others, intended impact could not always be fully achieved due to limiting factors.

OCHA country offices contributed to UN system-wide coherence. Case studies illustrated context-specific initiatives by country offices that contributed to increased coherence in humanitarian responses. While OCHA demonstrated its commitment to the system-wide goal to strengthen the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, stakeholders suggested that country offices needed to further support nexus operationalization.

Country offices were proactive in efforts to meet the needs of specific affected populations. However, given the rapidly changing humanitarian landscape, OCHA broad mandate and resource limitations, the ability of country offices to be fit-for-purpose was highly challenging. Lesson learning opportunities exist in the following areas: managing complexity of mandate operationalization; enhancing shared vision across partner entities; and country-specific prioritization within the context of limited resources.

OIOS makes the following five important recommendations to:

a) Review OCHA approach and current role in the operationalization of country-level policies related to (1) accountability to affected populations, (2) localization and (3) Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus;
b) Build on efforts to simplify the Humanitarian Planning Cycle process and further empower Humanitarian Coordinators to develop context-specific coordination and response solutions;

c) Fill gaps and promote complementary initiatives for effective funds management, ensure that country-level offices have the resources to effectively manage the funds, monitor for results and respond to project implementer expectations;

d) Continue efforts to address the challenges of multiple, parallel coordination mechanisms where they exist;

e) Take additional steps to ensure effective management of human resources in country offices.

I. Introduction and objective

1.   The overall objective of this Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluation was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of subprogramme 2 implemented by the Operations and Advocacy Division and focused on the country-level operations of the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The evaluation topic emerged from a programme-level risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper. The evaluation conforms with the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN System.[1]

2.   OCHA management comments were sought on the draft report and considered in the final report. The OCHA response is included in Annex I.

II. Background

Mandate, roles and stakeholders

3.   OCHA is responsible for ensuring the timely, coherent, coordinated and principled response of the international community to natural disasters and complex emergencies and for facilitating the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and sustainable development. The mandate derives from the priorities established in relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions, including resolution 46/182 in 1991. This mandate has been confirmed and consolidated through the normative developments of various resolutions over the past 26 years.[2]

4.   The UN 2022 humanitarian response plan aimed to reach 183 million vulnerable people in 63 countries at a cost of $41 billion.[3] Despite these efforts, the Global Humanitarian Overview 2023 warns that the number of individuals requiring humanitarian assistance and protection will reach an unprecedented 339 million in 2023, up from 274 million at the start of 2022 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, increasing conflicts, and the escalating climate crisis.

5.   The primary function of OCHA is its lead role in the coordination of humanitarian assistance. It executes this role by: assisting the Secretary-General in the coordination of system-wide response to humanitarian emergencies that require a system-wide response; working closely with members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ensure coordination among the humanitarian, political and peacekeeping dimensions of emergencies; providing substantive support to the General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on humanitarian issues; and seeking to strengthen humanitarian response capabilities for natural disasters as a contribution to sustainable development, in close collaboration with relevant partners.

6.   OCHA implements activities in five main areas, namely: coordination, policy, advocacy, information management and humanitarian financing, under five subprogrammes:[4] (1) Policy and analysis; (2) Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response; (3) Natural disaster reduction; (4) Emergency support services; and (5) Humanitarian emergency information and advocacy.

7.   Subprogramme 2 seeks to contribute toward ensuring a coherent, effective and timely humanitarian response to alleviate human suffering in natural disasters and complex emergencies. As

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[1] United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016.
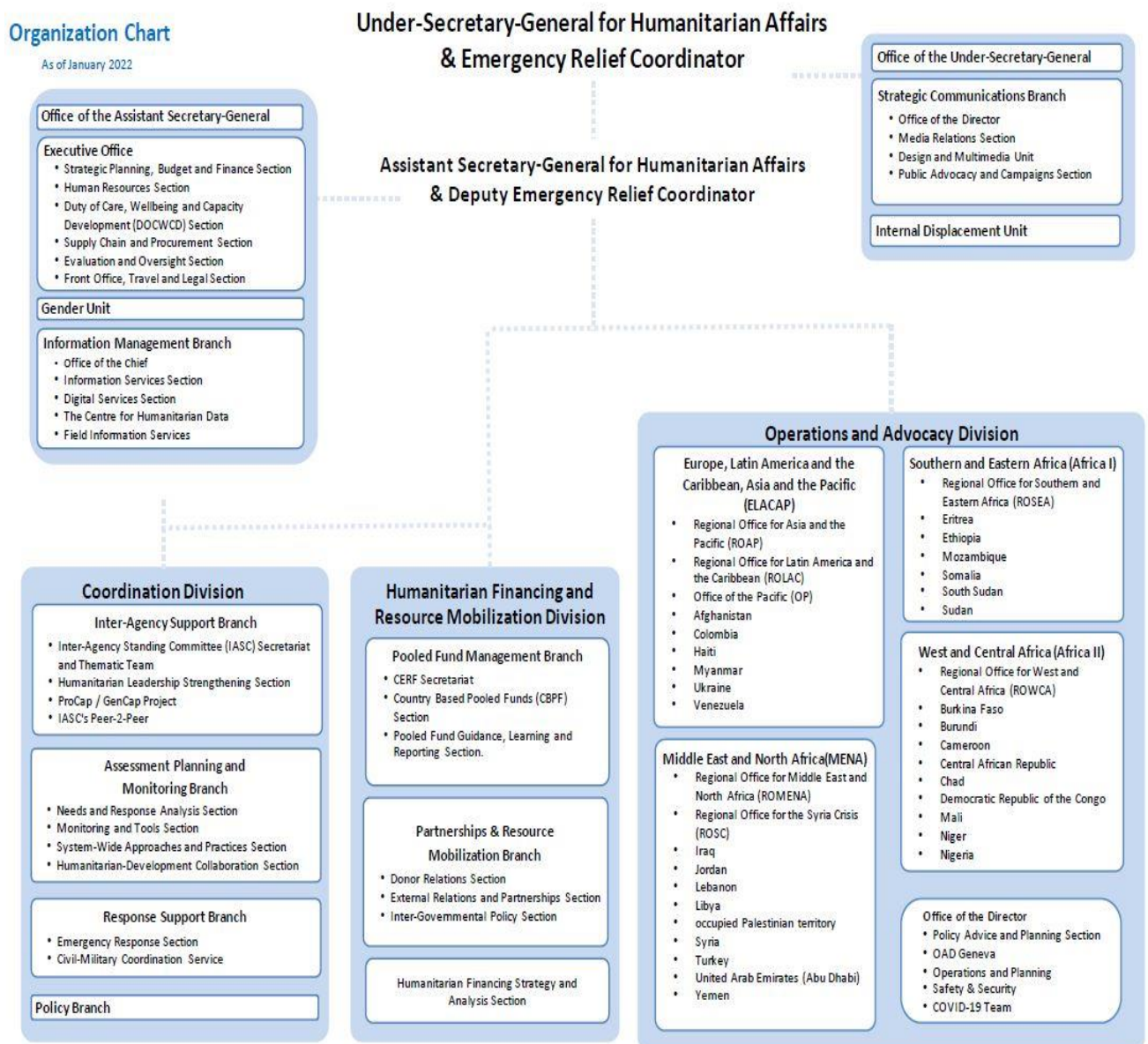[2] A/76/6 (Sect.27) para 27.1. e.g., GA Resolution 70/165, etc.
[3] A/76/6 (Sect.27), p3.
[4] A/76/6 (Sect. 27). Subprogramme 3 is implemented by the Secretariat of the ISDR.

this is the core of OCHA mandate, it is implemented by all divisions including OCHA country offices (Figure 1).

8.   Figure I provides an overview of the current OCHA organizational structure. OCHA presence includes two headquarter (HQ) locations (New York and Geneva), five regional offices, 32 country offices and 22 humanitarian advisor teams.

Figure I: UN OCHA Organization Chart

Organization Chart
As of January 2022

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief Coordinator

Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator

Office of the Assistant Secretary-General

Executive Office
- Strategic Planning, Budget and Finance Section
- Human Resources Section
- Duty of Care, Wellbeing and Capacity Development (DOCWCD) Section
- Supply Chain and Procurement Section
- Evaluation and Oversight Section
- Front Office, Travel and Legal Section

Gender Unit

Information Management Branch
- Office of the Chief
- Information Services Section
- Digital Services Section
- The Centre for Humanitarian Data
- Field Information Services

Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Strategic Communications Branch
- Office of the Director
- Media Relations Section
- Design and Multimedia Unit
- Public Advocacy and Campaigns Section

Internal Displacement Unit

Coordination Division

Inter-Agency Support Branch
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Secretariat and Thematic Team
- Humanitarian Leadership Strengthening Section
- ProCap / GenCap Project
- IASC's Peer-2-Peer

Assessment Planning and Monitoring Branch
- Needs and Response Analysis Section
- Monitoring and Tools Section
- System-Wide Approaches and Practices Section
- Humanitarian-Development Collaboration Section

Response Support Branch
- Emergency Response Section
- Civil-Military Coordination Service

Policy Branch

Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division

Pooled Fund Management Branch
- CERF Secretariat
- Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF) Section
- Pooled Fund Guidance, Learning and Reporting Section.

Partnerships & Resource Mobilization Branch
- Donor Relations Section
- External Relations and Partnerships Section
- Inter-Governmental Policy Section

Humanitarian Financing Strategy and Analysis Section

Operations and Advocacy Division

Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific (ELACAP)
- Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)
- Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)
- Office of the Pacific (OP)
- Afghanistan
- Colombia
- Haiti
- Myanmar
- Ukraine
- Venezuela

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
- Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA)
- Regional Office for the Syria Crisis (ROSC)
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Libya
- occupied Palestinian territory
- Syria
- Turkey
- United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi)
- Yemen

Southern and Eastern Africa (Africa I)
- Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa (ROSEA)
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Mozambique
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan

West and Central Africa (Africa II)
- Regional Office for West and Central Africa (ROWCA)
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Mali
- Niger
- Nigeria

Office of the Director
- Policy Advice and Planning Section
- OAD Geneva
- Operations and Planning
- Safety & Security
- COVID-19 Team

Source: OCHA

Leadership structure

9.   Resolution 46/182 also created the position of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) in the person of the OCHA Under-Secretary-General (USG), who serves as a single UN focal point responsible for all emergencies requiring UN humanitarian assistance, as well as for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities. To assist with this coordination, the

resolution also established the IASC under the leadership of the ERC. The IASC is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance of UN and non-UN entities.

Resources

10.   The budget of OCHA is resourced through assessed contributions --the regular budget (RB)-- and extrabudgetary resources (XB). The 2022 OCHA budget was approximately $415,537,800 ($18,544,100 RB and $396,993,700 XB).

11.   According to Figure II, the majority of OCHA budgetary resources during the period of 2019 to 2022 were allocated to subprogramme 2, with 90 percent of all posts in OCHA allocated to this subprogramme.

Figure II: Combined RB and XB Funding by subprogramme 2019 - 2022 (USD Millions)
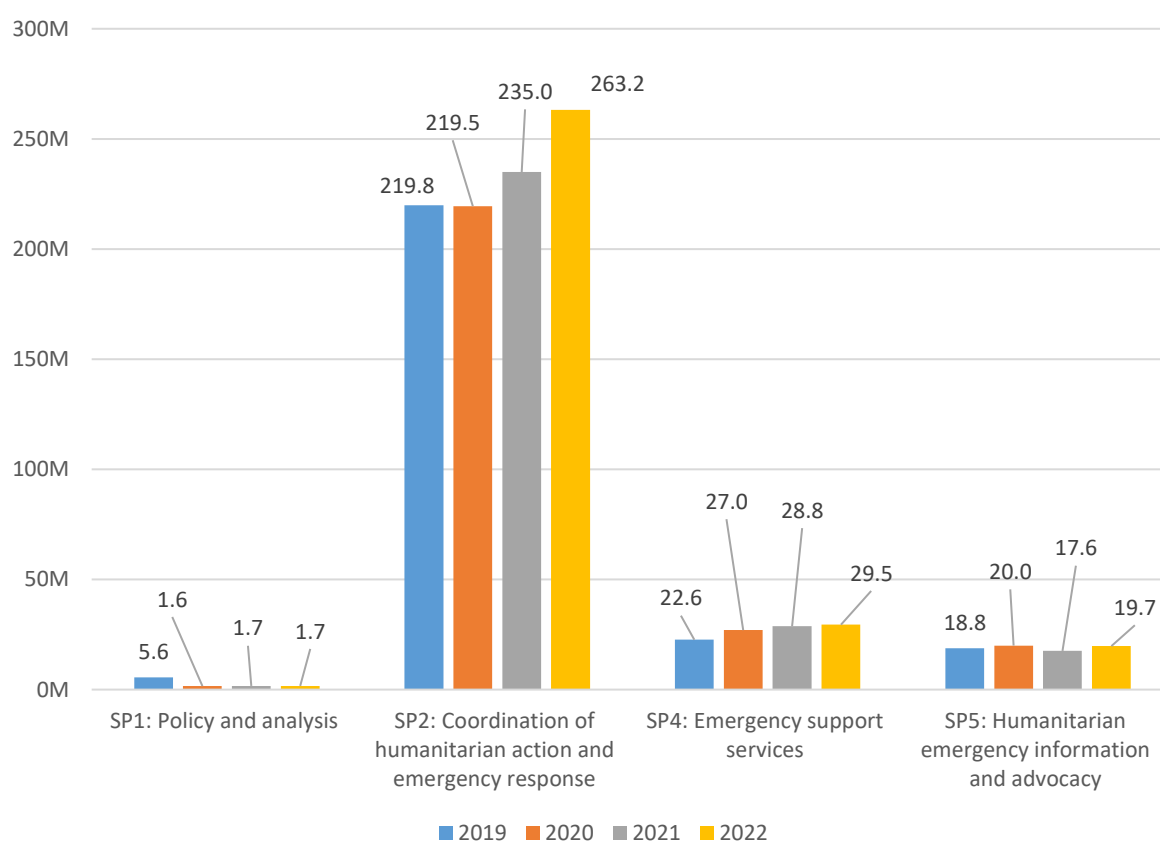
Source: A/77/6 (Sect. 27), A/76/6 (Sect. 27), A/75/6 (Sect. 27), A/74/6 (Sect. 27).

III.   Scope and Methodology

12.   The evaluation employed a mixed-method approach comprised of the following:

(a) Four country-level structured case study analyses to identify outcomes at the level of intended beneficiaries, trends, good practices and gaps;[5]

(b) Review of documents such as policies and procedures; OCHA Global Partner Survey; Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs); Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs); Humanitarian Fund (HF) data; etc.

(c) Analysis of databases and programme performance and budgetary data;

(d) Observations of Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings;

(e) OCHA staff survey[6] and stakeholder survey which included Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) staff, HCT representatives and other country, regional and global stakeholders;[7]

(f) OCHA staff (57) and stakeholder interviews and focus groups, including with representatives of affected populations, RCO staff, HCT representatives and other country, regional and global stakeholders (106 interviews and 16 group discussions).

13.   *Limitations:* Qualitative data was gathered through four case study countries as proxies for subprogramme-wide assessments. OIOS mitigated the associated limitation by triangulating this information with other data sources, e.g., staff and stakeholder surveys; samples utilized for these surveys covered all OCHA countries and included all known stakeholders for which OCHA had full contact information. Utilization of triangulated data for all report findings was also used to minimize the impact of response bias. The evaluation team was unable to conduct in-person data collection in Afghanistan due to security concerns and prolonged visa processing; virtual interviews were utilized instead.

IV.   Evaluation Results

Relevance

A.   OCHA added unique value by supporting the Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and HCTs and was considered relevant and responsive.

OCHA key contributions and support added significant value to country-level humanitarian responses.

14.   OCHA country offices, within subprogramme 2, were responsible for an extensive list of multifaceted interventions, which contributed to the provision of necessary humanitarian tools and facilitated responses. Figure III shows OCHA interventions and their contribution to humanitarian response.

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[5] Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Lebanon and Venezuela.
[6] 738/1677 (response rate of 44%).
[7] 1596/7988 (response rate of 20%).

Figure III: OCHA interventions and added value
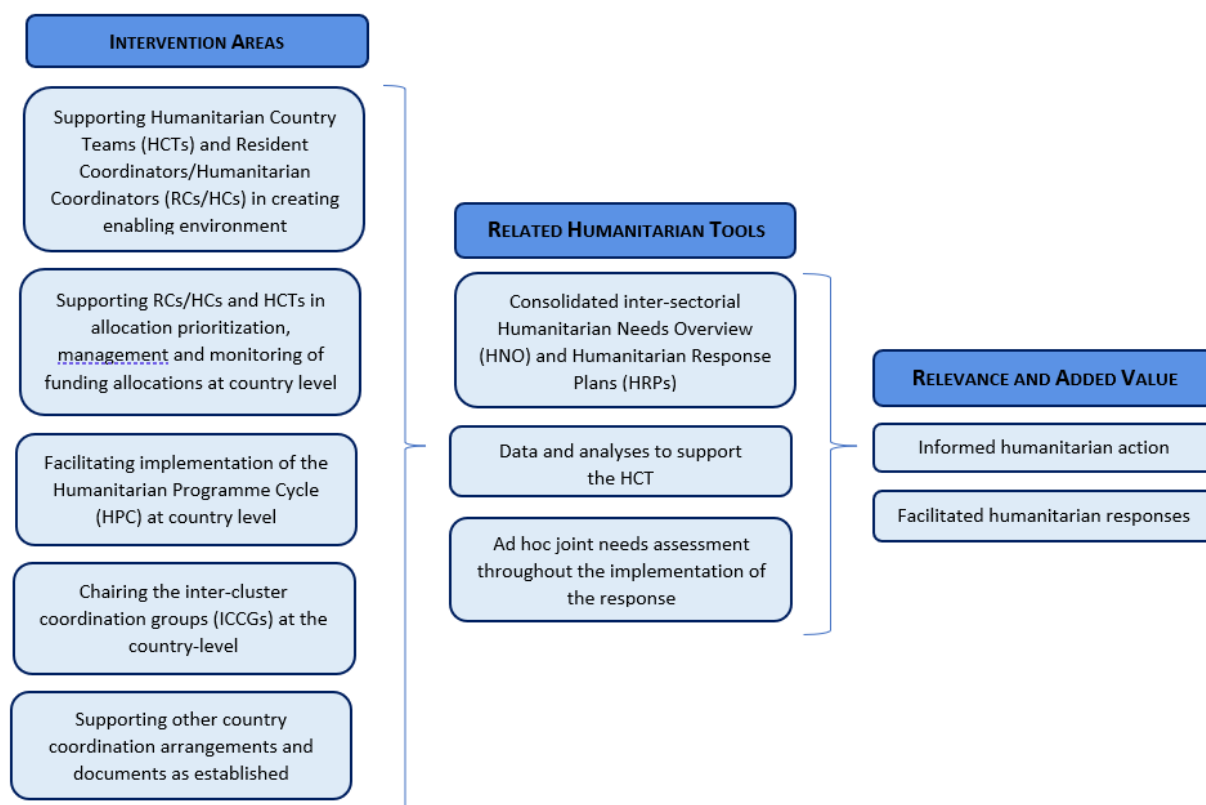
15.   Most stakeholder survey respondents (79 percent) either strongly or somewhat agreed that OCHA activities brought unique added value in the form of better coordinated humanitarian responses within a highly challenging context (see Figure IV). Ninety-three percent of staff survey respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that OCHA brought unique added value.

Figure IV: OCHA activities brought unique contributions which added value to coordinated humanitarian responses
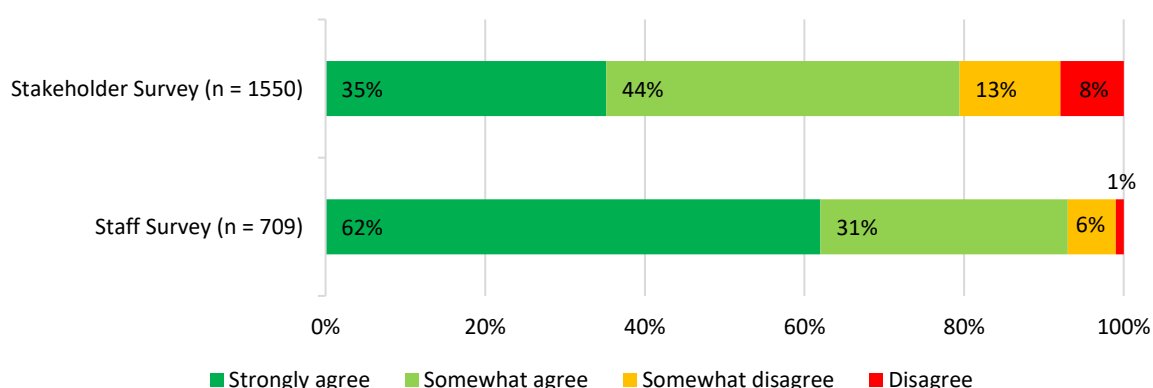
Source: OIOS Stakeholder and staff surveys.

16.   Across UN entity, NGO/civil society organization (CSO), donor and other survey respondent groups, OCHA was consistently seen as adding the most value in the areas in Figure V. OCHA information sharing/information management (IM) work was twice as likely as other functions to be identified as an area where OCHA added the most value at country-level. Other most cited added

value areas included: keeping crisis on the agenda; liaising with authorities; resource mobilization; convening power; and OCHA neutrality.

**Figure V: OCHA added value to humanitarian response work at country-level by category**
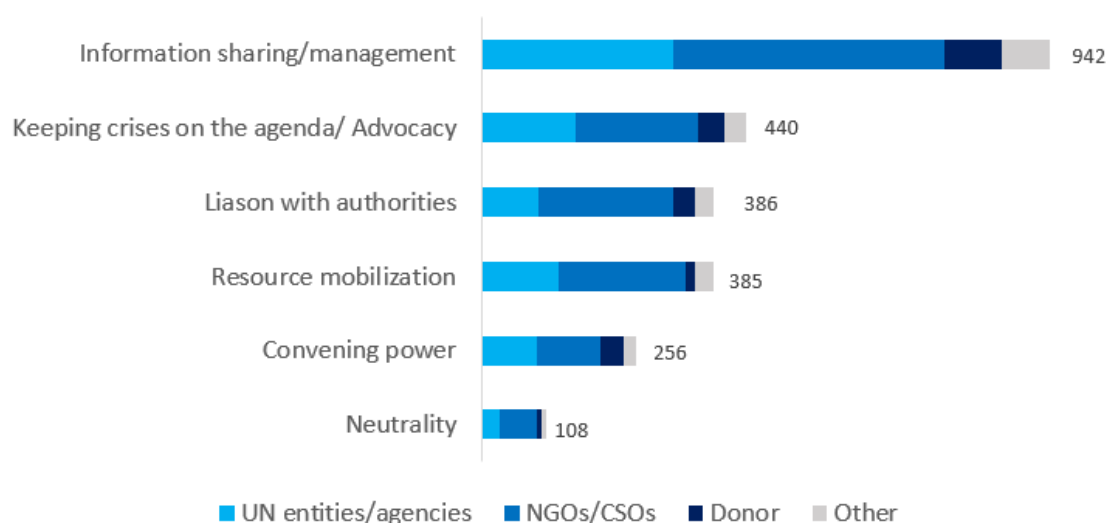
Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

OCHA coordination work was considered responsive to the diverse set of stakeholders who support humanitarian response.

17.   Stakeholder survey respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that OCHA was responsive to their needs and priorities (Figure VI). This included being responsive to Resident Coordinators (RC)/HCs (84 percent), HCTs (79 percent), and people affected by humanitarian crises (83 percent), as well as supporting coordinated prioritization at country-level (79 percent). Furthermore, "responsive staff and easy to approach" was among the top comments provided by stakeholder survey respondents who volunteered information on OCHA strengths.

Figure VI: OCHA relevance at country-level
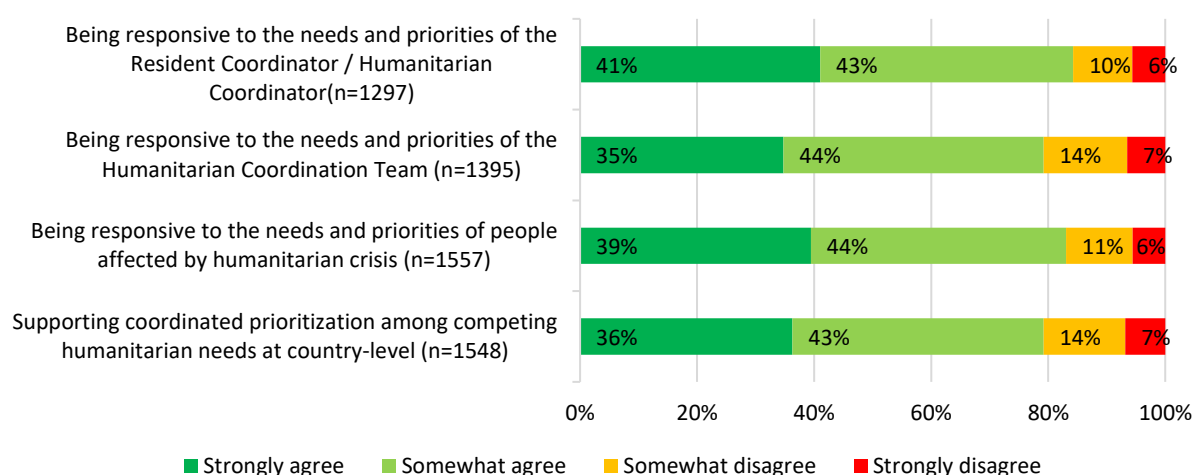
Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

18.   Interviewees also found OCHA to be highly responsive at country-level: 81 percent provided positive feedback, 16 percent provided a mix of positive and less favourable feedback, and 3 percent provided less favourable feedback. Interviewees recognized OCHA responsiveness in support of the Inter-cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), HCT, Clusters and RC/HCs. In the case of RC/HC support, positive comments outweighed less favourable comments by a factor of more than 7:1.

19.   Among stakeholder survey respondents who volunteered recommendations on how OCHA country operations could improve their relevance or responsiveness, the top three areas cited all related to increasing the level of OCHA engagement. For example, through more coordination at the multi-sector level and further leveraging of the capacities of local partners, including national NGOs (NNGOs). Some interviewees also suggested that OCHA utilize its unique position with the HCT/UN Country Team (UNCT) to further improve coordination meetings in a manner that, for example, improves the efficiency of these forums. Interviewees suggested establishing clearer agendas; concentrating on strategic discussions; maintaining meeting regularity; streamlining schedules to minimize duplication; encouraging balanced participation; and fostering additional decision-making with follow-through on agreed actions.

Effectiveness

B. OCHA country offices contributed toward meeting the humanitarian needs of affected populations and supported and strengthened coordination of humanitarian responses despite multiple challenges.

OCHA IM, HNO and HRPs were perceived to be mostly effective tools to raise situational awareness and support response planning, advocacy, and resource mobilization. However, some stakeholders expressed concerns over data quality assurance and the heaviness of the process.

20.   Stakeholders generally had a positive view of OCHA country-level IM and information sharing function. The most frequently cited comment by interviewees was that the OCHA IM function provided coherent data on the context and the humanitarian response (Figure VII). Additionally, 92 percent of stakeholder survey respondents rated these services/tools very or somewhat useful and 94 percent reported that they improved situational awareness. Partners and donors reported regularly consulting and using OCHA IM products, such as situation reports, maps, and dashboards, and noted that OCHA was able to share information quickly throughout the response. Stakeholders also noted that OCHA faced some challenges in this area.

Figure VII: Top OCHA IM strengths and challenges by citation
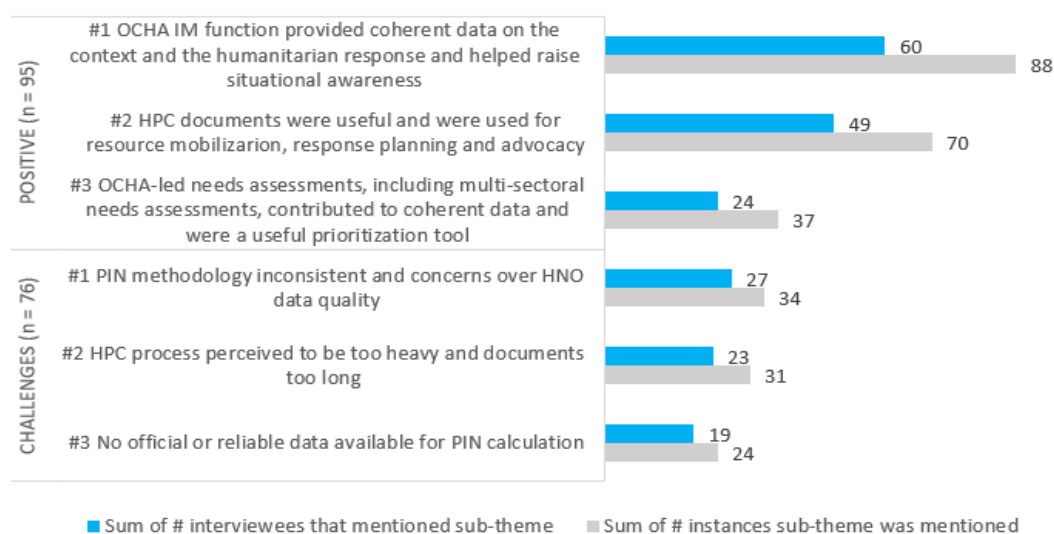
Source: OIOS interview analysis.

21.   A key challenge raised by stakeholders was the methodological differences between the People in Need (PIN) calculation processes across different entities and countries. This was the most frequently cited challenge associated with the OCHA country-level IM function (Figure VII). An illustrative example of the degree to which PIN figures can differ between entities can be seen in one case-study country, where in 2022 the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations estimated 19.7 million people in need, while the HNO and HRP estimated only 7 million. Interviewees reported that PIN calculation methodologies were often undermined by factors such as prior year numbers, funding expectations or negotiations, which could result in figures that were not necessarily aligned with the actual needs of the population. Furthermore, the lack of official or reliable data (third most cited reason) across the four case study countries exacerbated challenges, as clusters reportedly lacked reliable data sources on which to base their PIN calculation.

22.   The absence of objectively comparable PIN data may have implications for global funding allocation decision-making processes. Given increasing funding gaps, accurate data is essential for determining the most effective use of available resources to protect the lives of people in crisis. Some interviewees raised questions about the adequacy of OCHA data quality assurance, including at HQ level, specifically regarding the complexity of the methodologies used. A review of OCHA annual Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) quality review process methodology revealed that while the quality assurance methodology included safeguards for the analytical data standards (e.g., which data sources were used or whether PIN calculation methodology was described), it did not evaluate validity of PIN data or consistency of calculation methodology.

23.   In two of the four case study countries --Afghanistan and Lebanon-- OCHA-led Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessments (MSNAs) were reported to have brought more consistency to the PIN calculation and improved the HRP process by making information more coherent and improving the quality of data across clusters. Figure VII shows that this was the third most frequently cited positive comment in relation to OCHA support to the HPC process.

24.   Finally, a diverse group of stakeholders (UN entity, NGO representatives and OCHA staff at global, regional and country levels) expressed concern related to the HPC process being time-consuming and process-heavy, with many participants referencing a sense of exhaustion. This was the second most frequently cited challenge (Figure VII). Interviewees reported that the HPC documents (HNOs and HRPs) were too long and that this cumbersome process had an adverse effect on implementation-related responsibilities. While recognizing the importance of the HPC documents for resource mobilization, response planning and advocacy (see second most cited positive comment), stakeholders and OCHA staff alike suggested that the process could be streamlined. OCHA senior staff indicated that transformative processes, including HPC and ERC flagship reforms, were being pursued to simplify and streamline coordination tools.

OCHA advocacy and stakeholder liaison work was critical to strengthening principled humanitarian action and ensuring access and security for humanitarian actors.

25.   OCHA country-level advocacy and liaison with authorities were reportedly critical to strengthening principled humanitarian action. Figure VIII shows almost three-quarters of stakeholder survey respondents rated OCHA country-level advocacy work as effective overall (73 percent). Interviewees noted that OCHA efforts advocating for humanitarian principles and capacity building for authorities helped protect the humanitarian community from outside pressures, enhancing response neutrality. For example, in Afghanistan, after the August 2021 change of government, OCHA engaged with the *de facto* authorities to sensitize them on humanitarian principles, including the importance of women's participation in response delivery. These efforts were reportedly crucial in enabling the continuation of a certain degree of principled humanitarian action.

Figure VIII: Effectiveness of advocacy services
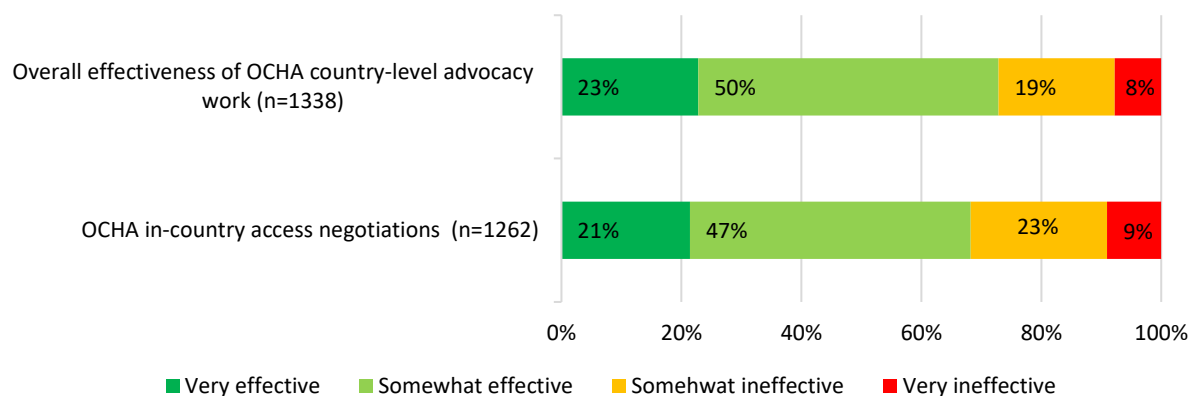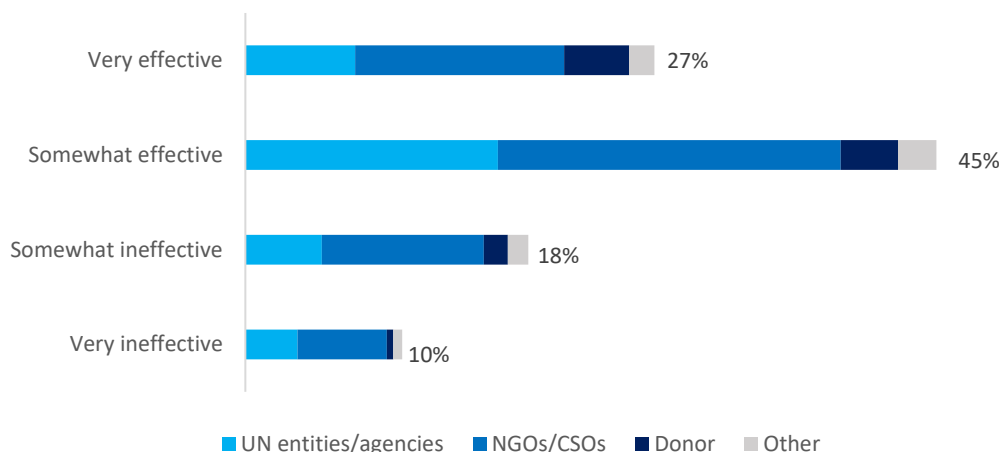

Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

26.   In addition, access and security were key areas where the OCHA advocacy function had a positive impact. More than two-thirds of stakeholder survey respondents (68 percent) rated OCHA country-level access negotiations as effective (Figure VIII). Interviewees across case studies commended a variety of access and security-related interventions such as: negotiating access for UN agencies, INGOs and NNGOs; helping humanitarian actors when they were in danger; liaising with non-state armed actors; and opening main supply routes. OCHA reportedly played a critical role in opening the humanitarian space in places where humanitarian assistance was highly politicized and there was little room for organizations to operate.

27.   While most stakeholder survey respondents rated OCHA advocacy and access efforts as effective, there were some who offered a different perspective. Across case studies, several interviewees pointed out that more needed to be done to facilitate humanitarian access and promote principled humanitarian action, and that OCHA could have been more decisively at the forefront. These interviewees implied that, by assuming a more assertive leadership role going forward, OCHA would be able to provide critical support to all agencies, ensuring that access and advocacy are available to all humanitarian actors, regardless of their size or resources.

While OCHA Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) filled gaps in response delivery, served as catalysts for overall coordination and were a key mechanism to promote localization efforts, issues were raised related to efficiency and transparency.

28.   Stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents highlighted many positive aspects of OCHA managed CBPFs. Over two-thirds of stakeholder survey respondents rated OCHA management of CBPFs as very or somewhat effective (72 percent), while smaller proportions rated it somewhat or very ineffective (28 percent) (Figure IX). An analysis of these responses by type showed similar proportions, suggesting that the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction was consistent across stakeholder types. Interviews and focus group discussions with affected populations and people assisted by CBPF projects in Lebanon, CAR and Venezuela revealed a wide range of positive impacts on their lives; these included availability of hygiene kits and food distributions which helped to decrease distress; livelihood programming which improved income generation; and reduction of gender-based violence survivor stigma.

Figure IX: OCHA at country level had been effective in management of country-based pooled funds

Very effective — 27%
Somewhat effective — 45%
Somewhat ineffective — 18%
Very ineffective — 10%

■ UN entities/agencies ■ NGOs/CSOs ■ Donor ■ Other

Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

29.   In line with OCHA objectives, CBPFs were seen as an essential tool to promote the localization agenda by supporting the development of national and local capacities to prepare for and respond to crises. This was the most cited comment from interviewees on the effectiveness of CBPFs (Figure XI below). According to the OCHA 2021 CBPF review,[8] 35 percent of the funding was allocated to NNGOs, of which 27 percent was allocated through direct funding. This exceeded the target of 25 percent set forth in the Grand Bargain Agreement at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). At the same time, an examination of the CBPF reviews suggested that this benchmark was only achieved in 13 (65 percent) out of the 20 CBPFs for which information was publicly available.[9] According to interviewees, the main obstacles to localization included concerns about a low level of capacity, corruption possibilities, and potentially insufficient neutrality of some local actors. Across case study countries, there were some voices, including donors, highlighting that localization was a key area where continued work was needed to empower affected communities to manage their own response efforts with support from the international humanitarian community.

30.   In addition, CBPFs were perceived as effective tools to support HCs in delivering principled, prioritized, and needs-based humanitarian action in the local context and promote enhanced coordination. They were intended to provide life-saving humanitarian response and enhance localization. The second and third most cited positive comments in Figure X speak to the effectiveness of the CBPFs in this regard. Interviewees reported that, in some instances CBPFs helped to fund response efforts which were needed but not necessarily the highest donor priorities, thus filling gaps perceived by, for example, UN partner agencies. Furthermore, they described that beyond being a financing body, CBPFs were also viewed as a coordination forum and a tool to incentivize stakeholders to participate in the cluster system, making the link between actors stronger.

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[8] 2021, Country-based Pooled Funds 2021 in Review.
[9] CBPF Data, https://cbpf.data.unocha.org/.

Figure X: Top OCHA CBPF management strengths and challenges by citation
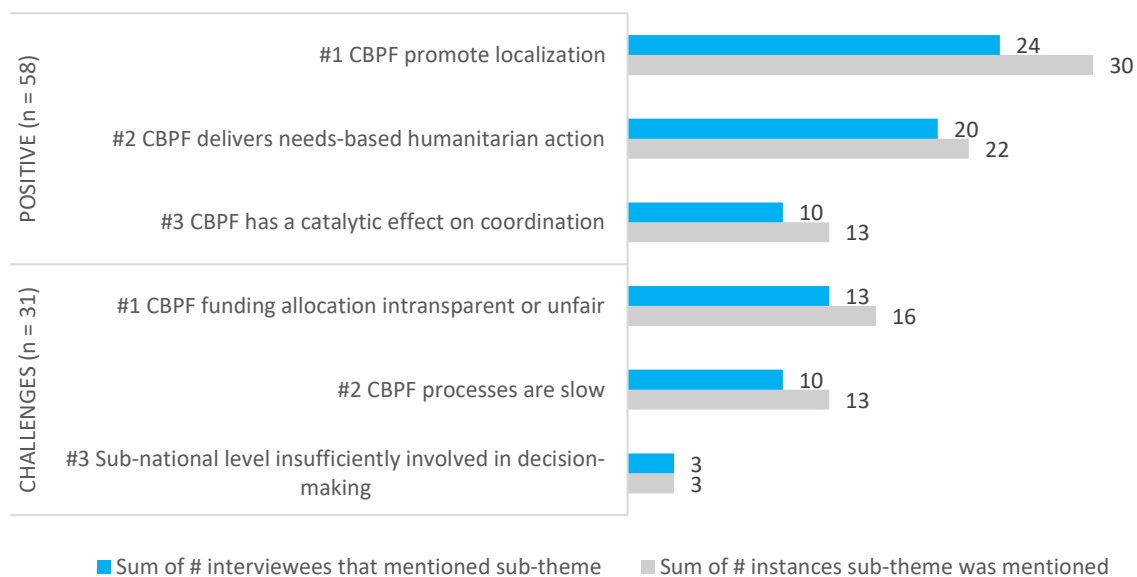
Source: Thematic analysis of interviews by OIOS.

31.   At the same time, Figure X shows that INGO and NNGO representatives identified challenges with transparency and inclusivity in the fund allocation process. They pointed out insufficient involvement of cluster members and a perceived top-down approach, as well as a lack of feedback both during and after the application process. This lack of inclusivity was also reflected in concerns raised by some interviewees that the sub-national level was not sufficiently involved in the decision-making processes. Additionally, there were calls for greater oversight, with some interviewees expressing concerns that cluster coordinators were making biased decisions regarding the selection of proposals. Furthermore, some interviewees pointed out that the CBPF process was slow and difficult, particularly for NNGOs. Specific feedback included that the due diligence process took up to one year and that the manual had high standards that were difficult for NNGOs to comply with.

32.   Triangulation with the 2021 OCHA partner survey confirmed some of these findings. According to the survey, partners were neutral on OCHA CBPF management and transparency and requested more involvement in CBPF processes, more information on funding criteria used, further simplification of the fund application process, and/or technical support to help them better manage the different CBPF project cycles.

Despite all contributions towards immediate outcomes, OCHA intended impact could not always be fully achieved due to several limiting factors.

33.   Surveys, interviews, and document reviews clearly indicated that OCHA had a tangible impact on improving the lives of affected populations. The CBPFs reached over 106 million people in 2021, 82 percent of the total target of 130 million,[10] and interviewees from affected populations in CAR, Venezuela and Lebanon provided numerous testimonies on how these projects impacted their lives. Additionally, as demonstrated in previous sections, OCHA coordination efforts were reportedly crucial in preventing duplication and ensuring principled humanitarian action and efficient resource allocation, ultimately leading to greater reach and impact on the lives of affected populations.

34.   There were numerous examples of how the quality and quantity of humanitarian responses were not always in line with the affected populations' needs or preferences and that responses were

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[10] CBPF Data | https://cbpf.data.unocha.org/.

often not sufficiently sustainable. For instance, despite a relatively well-funded HRP in Afghanistan, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance continued to increase. In 2021, 18.4 million people required aid, which increased to 24.4 million in 2022, and further increased to 28.3 million in 2023.[11] These alarming figures highlight the urgency and complexity of the humanitarian situation and suggest that the humanitarian responses were not sufficiently sustainable to enable people to become self-sufficient and graduate from aid reliance. Members of affected populations in the CAR expressed that aid received did not always align with their preferences, citing examples of food items they were unfamiliar with or unable to cook. In summary, numerous stakeholders noted that the impact of the response was not sufficiently sustainable, creating dependencies instead of fostering resilience and recovery. They called for a shift in approach toward investing in structures and training, to move people away from reliance on aid, especially in protracted crisis contexts.

35.   Stakeholders agreed that the impact on the lives of affected populations is a complex and multi-faceted outcome, and that OCHA had limited control. OCHA was not directly responsible for implementing humanitarian response efforts, and, overall, humanitarian responses were chronically underfunded.[12] In addition, OCHA was constrained by a mandate that prioritizes lifesaving actions over longer-term development. And the complex and prolonged nature of the crisis contexts in which humanitarian actors operated made it challenging to address the underlying, often political and economic issues that contribute to humanitarian needs. As one OCHA staff member in Afghanistan summarized, "No matter how good the response is, it will never be sufficient because the root causes are [often] political and economic, and OCHA is in a difficult place to tackle this, because it is beyond the humanitarian situation."

C. Country offices were proactive in efforts to meet the needs of specific affected populations; success was higher in some areas than others

36.   Case study data showed that OCHA proactively sought to keep a focus on the needs of specific sub-populations affected by humanitarian crises. Additionally, stakeholder survey respondents gave OCHA high marks in terms of the degree to which OCHA country-level operations played an essential role in ensuring that humanitarian assistance was sensitive to the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys in all their diversities, and persons with disabilities. Effectiveness regarding a gender focus was rated a bit higher than disability focus, with 81 percent strongly or somewhat agreeing vs. 72 percent (Figure XI).

Figure XI: Stakeholders report that OCHA country-level operations play an essential role to ensure that:
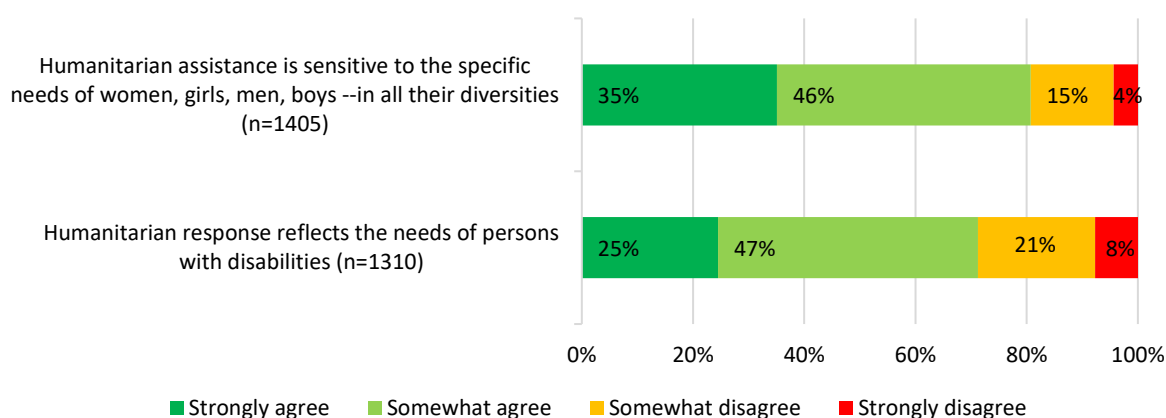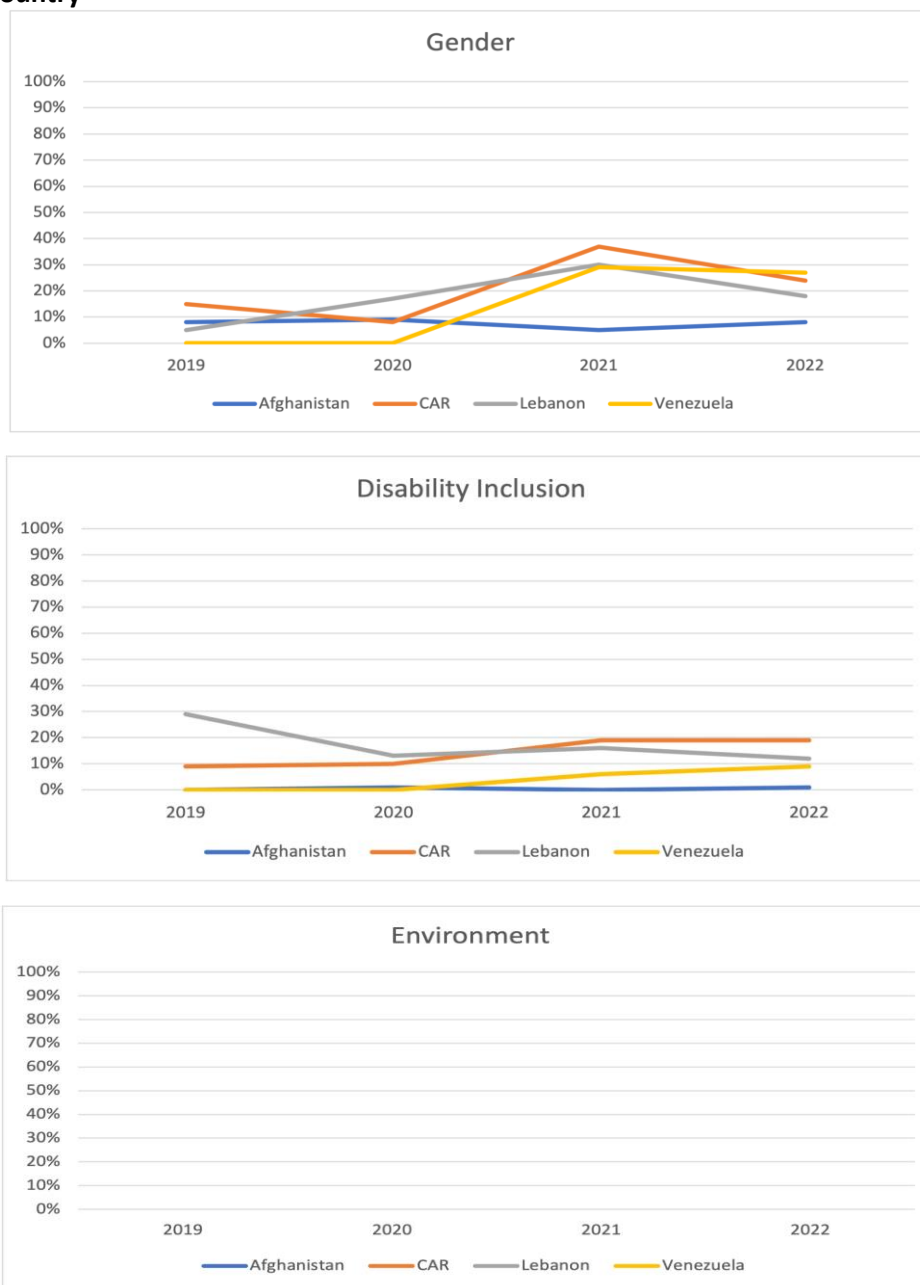

Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

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[11] Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan 2023, OCHA, 2023, p. 11.
[12] OCHA Financial Tracking Services, 2022

37.   Across case study countries, both interview and desk review analysis provided evidence that OCHA offices sought to promote the mainstreaming of gender and disability inclusion by prioritizing these aspects when deciding which HF/CBPF projects to approve (Figures XII- XIV). In Venezuela, analysis also showed a focus on approving a noteworthy number of projects with an education focus.

Figures XII, XIII and XIV: Proportion of CBFP projects with a focus on the following cross-cutting topics by country

Source: OIOS Document review of HF/CBPF data.

38.   However, as indicated above, the CBPFs were not utilized as a vehicle to promote the mainstreaming of environmental issues. Stakeholder survey respondents provided related feedback: 44 percent either somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement that "OCHA country-level operations play an essential role to ensure that humanitarian responses factor in environmental issues" (Figure XVI). Interviewees, including donors, reported missed opportunities in this area; for example, in supporting projects that utilized solar power vs. generators in countries with gas shortages and an abundance of sunny days.

Figure XV: OCHA country-level operations play an essential role to ensure that humanitarian responses factor in environmental considerations (n=1255)

Legend:
- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Somewhat agree
- ■ Somewhat disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
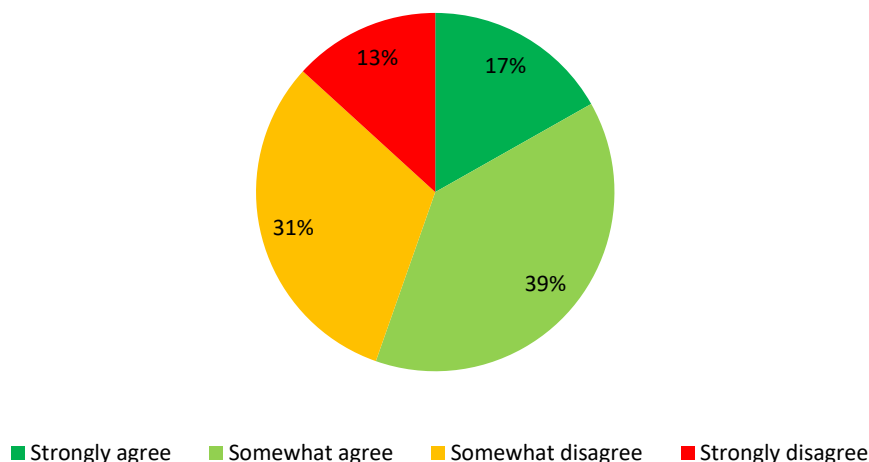
Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

Coherence

D. OCHA country offices contributed to UN system-wide coherence despite a multitude of challenges

Case studies illustrated context-specific initiatives which indicate OCHA contribution to increased coherence in humanitarian responses.

39. Ninety-eight percent of interviewees reported that OCHA effectively promoted a coherent humanitarian response, while 92 percent also pointed to areas for improvement. Among the wide variety of comments provided, the most frequent response was a positive one: 45 percent pointed to the coherence benefits which accrued from OCHA being an effective and neutral coordinator at country-level. One interviewee summarized that "OCHA is perceived as a neutral stakeholder whose only agenda is to serve the people and act in affected population's best interest. They don't compete for funding like other agencies do. OCHA also helps to conduct diplomatic conversations when there are fights between agencies. OCHA is an effective coordinator."

40. Case study analysis identified positive examples of OCHA contributions to coherent humanitarian responses in each case study country.

Afghanistan: OCHA played a critical role in ensuring a coherent, on-going response in the face of a quickly changing context. OCHA was one of the few agencies that maintained a presence in the country after August 15, 2021, which reportedly encouraged other agencies to continue working or to eventually re-establish their presences. OCHA ability to negotiate with authorities on local, provincial and national levels ensured the evacuation of NGO compounds, access, and security, as well as the ability for women staff to continue their work. OCHA, through the Central Emergency Response Fund, was able to kick start a response to the ruptures in basic health coverage previously dependent on international development funding, which had ceased due to the change in regime, thus also paving the way for all other donors to follow. Furthermore, OCHA ensured that cash continued to be available for humanitarian assistance in the country when the banking systems were down. In response to the earthquake in June 2022, OCHA was on the ground within 48 hours. To facilitate coherent and timely humanitarian action, OCHA assigned an area coordinator and established three hubs in the most impacted locations. OCHA coordinated the joint needs

assessment in impacted areas, the provision of assistance (94 percent of the affected households were reportedly reached), the exit strategy from the affected region, and winterization preparations.
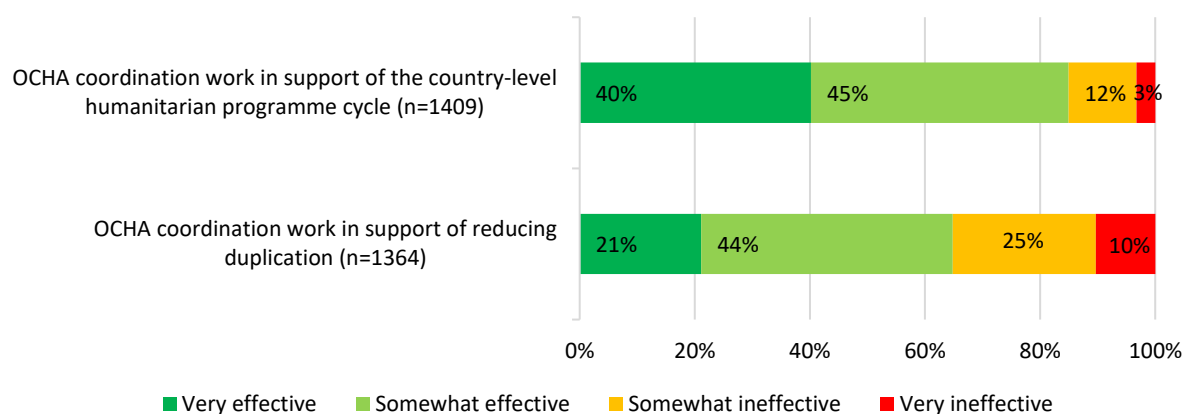

CAR: OCHA covers a vast geographical territory with a main office in Bangui and 11 sub-national offices (5 sub-offices and 6 antennas). Many offices are in very remote locations. OCHA management recognized the associated risks of a "Bangui-centric" approach and took steps to de-centralize and deliver better targeted and more coherent humanitarian responses to affected populations in remote areas. For example: field-based workshops were conducted, and actions were taken to better meet technology and transport needs of sub-national offices. In addition, OCHA sub-national office managers worked in Bangui on a short-term basis and, when vacant posts were available, there was some rotation between Bangui and field-based staff. Additionally, stakeholders were impressed with the on-time delivery of the HNO and HRP as tools that promoted coherence, and those involved in the humanitarian planning cycle were proud of the timeliness and quality of these tools. In the words of one donor organization, "This is one of the best HRPs. It is among the few that are on time, so it gets to us [donors] in time to influence the discussions which are going on in my capital…" Finally, the office was recognized for its proactive work to support coherent implementation of cash assistance.

Lebanon: As the humanitarian crisis evolved from a primarily Syrian refugee crisis to one that extended to the Lebanese population, OCHA advocated for a more holistic and coherent approach. This included coordinating across the majority of the 26 UN entities operating in Lebanon, donors, HF implementing partners and government officials. OCHA country-level leadership and staff advocated for an evidence-based, data-oriented approach, including the MSNA and the Emergency Response Plan (ERP), both of which enabled a more comprehensive factoring in of the humanitarian needs of populations in Lebanon beyond those covered by the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), which was primarily refugee focused. Donors praised OCHA highly for this strong and challenging initiative, frequently citing OCHA strategic leadership as a key factor that positively influenced subsequent humanitarian response funding decisions.

Venezuela: OCHA played a crucial role in responding to the severe humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Through their humanitarian diplomacy work, significant strides to depoliticize the response were made, creating an enabling environment for humanitarian action. OCHA success was evident in the recognition and acceptance of humanitarian work by authorities and stakeholders, which opened the humanitarian space and facilitated access to affected communities. Additionally, OCHA took steps to effectively complement the refugee response (R4V), led by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration, by coordinating efforts to meet unaddressed needs for affected populations within Venezuela. OCHA work was pivotal in enhancing visibility of unmet needs and working towards a comprehensive response to the crisis in Venezuela.

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41.   Triangulation of case study data confirmed the existence of tangible contributions which demonstrated that OCHA country offices' interventions resulted in humanitarian action which was significantly more coherent than it would have been if OCHA did not exist. OCHA also promoted coherence through its role as the coordinator of the HPC, including as the Secretariat of HCTs; 85 percent of stakeholder survey respondents reported OCHA either very effectively or somewhat effectively supported a coordinated HPC (Figure XVI).

Figure XVI: OCHA effectiveness at country-level

OCHA coordination work in support of the country-level humanitarian programme cycle (n=1409): Very effective 40%, Somewhat effective 45%, Somewhat ineffective 12%, Very ineffective 3%

OCHA coordination work in support of reducing duplication (n=1364): Very effective 21%, Somewhat effective 44%, Somewhat ineffective 25%, Very ineffective 10%

■ Very effective ■ Somewhat effective ■ Somewhat ineffective ■ Very ineffective

Source: OIOS Stakeholder survey.

42.   Despite the existence of tangible coherence contributions, there remained room for improvement. Thirty-five percent of stakeholder respondents reported OCHA country-level coordination in support of reducing duplication was somewhat or very ineffective. OCHA staff appeared to be somewhat aware of this area for improvement; 21 percent of staff survey respondents reported OCHA country-level work to reduce duplication was somewhat or very ineffective.

43.   Among the 150 interviewees who provided feedback on areas for OCHA coordination improvement, the second most frequently cited area for improvement (40 of 150) was around insufficient coordination across responses undertaken within the context of different frameworks (or under the leadership of different entities). Other interviewees pointed to the need for OCHA to facilitate intersectional programming to increase impact (5 of 42).

While OCHA demonstrated commitment to the system-wide goal to strengthen the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, stakeholders suggested that OCHA needs to further support nexus operationalization.

44.   Improved coherence through a strengthening of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus was identified by most stakeholders as a top priority at the 2016 WHS and outlined in the Secretary-General's Report for the WHS.

45.   OCHA provides clearly articulated background on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus; in particular, this includes country-level goals which humanitarian and development partners are seeking to achieve, as well as links to OCHA-produced guidance. Notably these include: "New Way of Working" (2017) and "Operationalizing Collective Outcomes: Lessons Leaned and Best Practices from and for Country Implementation" (draft version 2019). Additionally, OCHA was the convenor of a group of partners that produced "Mapping of Good Practice in the Implementation of Humanitarian-Development-Peace Synthesis Report (September 2021). As stated in these publications, they are intended to "guide country leadership on how to articulate and operationalize collective outcomes" in line with the commitments established at the WHS.[13]

46.   Furthermore, the review by OIOS of performance documentation showed that the "OCHA: Strategic Plan 2018-2021" spelled out the OCHA commitment to support "the Secretary-General's vision for a more robust, results-oriented, efficient and cohesive UN Development System" and to proactively engage with IASC partners (UN agencies, International Federation of Red Cross and Red

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[13] WHS_Commitment_to_Action_8September2016.pdf (agendaforhumanity.org).

Crescent Societies, International Committee of the Red Cross, and NGOs), as well as emerging donors and the private sector accordingly.

47.   While the OIOS review concluded in a favourable assessment of these OCHA-produced (or - jointly developed) guidance documents, triangulation with other data indicated gaps in the Humanitarian-Development Nexus operationalization. While OCHA is only one of the multiple country-level partners envisioned to have a role in the operationalization of nexus goals, this feedback on challenges is of high relevance for OCHA, as the convenor of the HCT and custodian of the HPC. For instance, more than twice as many interviewees pointed to challenges vs. positive feedback on OCHA contributions toward coherent operationalization of nexus goals (94 vs. 44). The most frequent and second most frequently cited comments related to concerns about an insufficient focus on nexus at field level (26) and a lack of strategy, including a lack of shared vision on how to operationalize the nexus (18). One interviewee summarized the feedback, saying "I think that everyone talks about the triple nexus but there is no commitment to implement it in practice. For us to move forward with it we need flexibility with funding and timing of programming."

48.   Stakeholder and staff survey data also pointed to the need for improvement. Thirty-four percent of stakeholder and 23 percent of staff survey respondents somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement that "OCHA country-level operations contribute to greater collaboration among humanitarian, development and peace actors, including working towards collective outcomes." Additionally, stakeholder survey respondents volunteered that "OCHA should further support strategies and division of responsibilities around the nexus work at country-level."

49.   Finally, data from the IASC Synthesis Report points to the need for significantly more to be done. As indicated in Figure XVII below, among sample countries, many gaps, challenges and requirements for additional support were identified, particularly in the critical area of financing in support of collective outcomes.

Figure XVII:
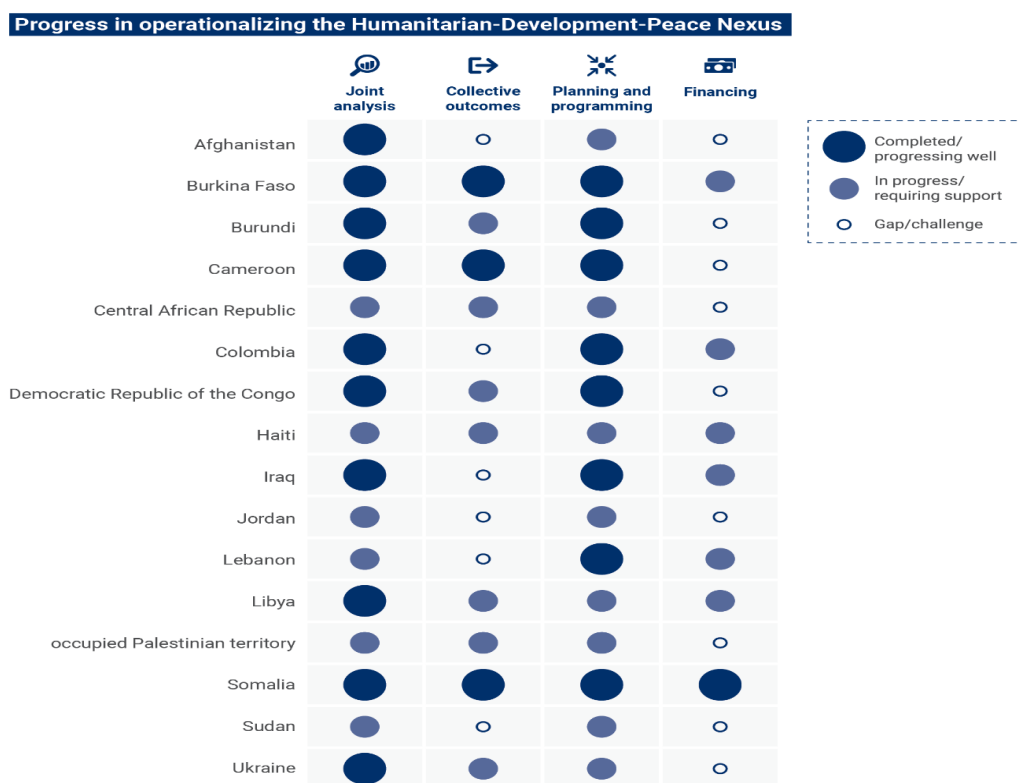
50.   While case study analysis included some examples of effective nexus operationalization support at country-level, at present, interview and stakeholder survey data indicated OCHA and their country-level partners are far from the goal of working together toward specific, measurable collective outcomes, despite an internal assessment indicating more positive progress in defining collective outcomes. OIOS analysis indicated that more capacity will be needed at country-level to meet the currently significant challenges and gaps.

Fit-for-purpose

E.   Given the rapidly changing humanitarian landscape, OCHA broad mandate and resource limitations, OCHA country offices were highly challenged to be fit-for-purpose with regard to operationalizing a complex mandate, sharing a common vision across partner entities and strategically allocating resources.

OCHA country offices faced numerous challenges associated with mandate, context and resources in their efforts to be fit-for-purpose; work to meet these challenges had some successes and provided lessons for the future.[14]

51.   The acceleration of humanitarian crises across the globe, and the associated complexities for affected populations and those supporting humanitarian responses are well recognized. The "OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2023," highlights three concerning data points:

   •   "In 2023, a record 339 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection (1 of 23) --a significant increase from 274 million people at the beginning of 2022."

   •   "In 2021, conflict and violence caused 14.4 million displacements - the highest figure recorded."

   •   "Floods and storms accounted for 91 percent of displacements in 2021, a year that saw 432 individual disasters. If current trends persist, the number of disasters is projected to reach 560, or 1.5 large-scale disasters per day."

52.   The funding gap for humanitarian assistance widened as the needs continued to increase. As shown in figure XVIII, the gap grew from 41 percent in 2016 to 45 percent in 2022, with required funding more than doubling from 20.3 billion to 51.7 billion.

Figure XVIII: Global funding gap

Source: https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2023

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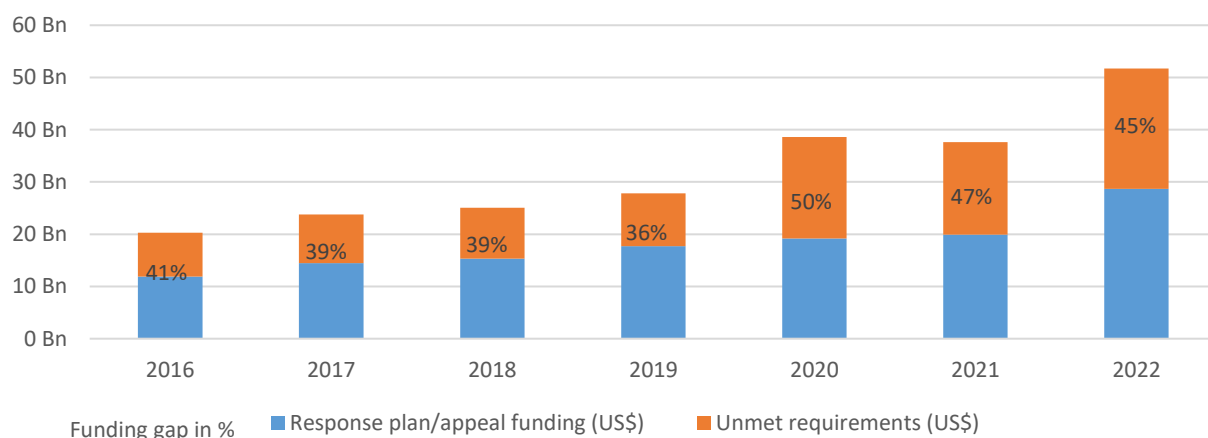
[14] **Fit-for-purpose:** OCHA ability to successfully and in timely manner adapt its work to respond to: the rapidly changing humanitarian landscape, which includes the emergence of significant new needs on ground; changes in the humanitarian financing landscape; and/or the introduction of innovative humanitarian response methodologies.

53.   The majority of stakeholder and staff interviewees perceived OCHA to be fit-for-purpose in a rapidly changing humanitarian context. For example, of the interviewees who volunteered specific feedback on the degree to which OCHA was fit-for-purpose, 42 provided positive feedback and 12 provided negative feedback. Additionally, stakeholders viewed OCHA as doing critical and necessary things that should continue, including responding quickly at the onset of crises; liaising with governments; building country-level capacities; coordinating from a neutral position; and providing access and security for humanitarian responses.

54.   Still, triangulated data showed that OCHA was confronted by several challenges in its quest to be fit-for-purpose. These are outlined below with associated lessons which could enhance the ability of OCHA to be fit-for-purpose within this increasing challenging landscape.

55.   **Challenge 1 – Complexity of mandate operationalization:** Very high expectations are inherent within the complex mandate of OCHA. Country offices are tasked with the integration and alignment of humanitarian interventions and strategies implemented by UN and non-UN actors to achieve optimal timing, sequencing, resource allocation and complementarity in pursuit of shared goals while ensuring compliance with the humanitarian principles. This includes providing country-level support to the double-hatted HC/RCs and triple-hatted Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General/HC/RCs, as well as a multitude of HCT partners with wide ranging orientations.

56.   **Challenge 2 - Lack of shared vision across partner entities:** Case study analysis indicated that partners did not have a shared vision on how OCHA mandate should be operationalized. Across all case studies, UN entity, donor, government and staff, interviewees raised several concerns related to how OCHA should --or should not-- operationalize its role in each country-level context.

57.   Interviewees from Lebanon highlighted lack of agreement challenges and stressed that the work to bring partners together around a coordinated, holistic way forward included the navigation of a tremendous degree of push back from key agencies. Interviewees noted that there was so much questioning of OCHA work that it required senior management from the New York Development Coordination Office and other high-ranking officials from other UN entities, including OCHA, to make multiple visits to pave the way forward for a HCT-level agreement. In Venezuela, many interviewees pointed to concerns around a lack of both clarity and agreement on the most appropriate role for the OCHA country office, especially relating to refugees and migrants. In the case of both Lebanon and Venezuela, these were scenarios with multiple coordination frameworks in place: in Lebanon, the LCRP, Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan and the ERP; and in Venezuela, the HRP and R4V. Many interviewees pointed to associated challenges and risks associated with the existence of multiple coordination frameworks, comments included:

- *"For what regards the coordination mechanisms, we have one UN coordination mechanism and OCHA should coordinate the R4V as well. There is no reason to have a parallel coordination system."*

- *"OCHA should try to make an inter-agency agreement on roles. Where does OCHA have the lead up to?"*

58.   In CAR and Afghanistan, stakeholder interviewees and/or governing officials frequently pointed to tensions around the protection of humanitarian principles, the balance between saving lives and reducing long-term dependency, and differing perspectives in related areas, including the determination of affected population aid distribution lists. Furthermore, both stakeholder and staff survey respondents identified "power dynamics across UN entities and governments" and "adverse power dynamics within the HCT" as the top OCHA challenges as it seeks to maximize its contributions toward meeting the needs of affected populations. On the clarity of roles between OCHA and other UN country-level entities, feedback from stakeholders, multiple HCT meeting observations and

documentation review pointed toward the need for a mechanism (or process) to better clarify and operationalize OCHA role vis-à-vis those of other stakeholders.

59.   OIOS raised this issue and made a recommendation in its 2013 evaluation of OCHA, for OCHA to further clarify and articulate the respective roles and responsibilities of the Office and its partners. Document review showed that several negotiations, high-level agreements and related activities were undertaken in recent years attempting to clarify respective roles. These have included how OCHA will operationalize its mandate at country-level. However, the same challenges remain. Country-level staff continue to face significant obstacles as they seek to coordinate effectively while dependent on the primarily voluntary engagement of other key players.

The dual challenges of its complex mandate operationalization and the lack of a shared vision of OCHA role elucidates two lessons for OCHA to become fit-for-purpose:

Fit-for-Purpose Lesson 1: To support accelerated progress on UN development reform operationalization, OCHA needs to identify its role more fully in relation to other country-level entities, advocate for additional specific changes,[15] and support additional monitoring of coordinated project implementation in conjunction with RCO offices.

Fit-for-Purpose Lesson 2: In order to take the next step forward in meeting needs of affected populations to better align with their preferences, additional country-level, context-specific work by OCHA to integrate activities is needed. OCHA needs to advocate more strongly for coordinated operationalization of the nexus policy, including on localization, capacity building, support of NNGOs/CSOs, and support for better integrated AAP structures.

60.   **Challenge 3 - Internal resources, prioritization and workload:** Triangulated data indicated that OCHA country-level staff were very stretched because of intensive workloads. "Understaffing" was among the top challenges cited by staff survey respondents, along with "OCHA spreading itself too thin" and "unsupportive senior management." Similarly, stakeholder survey respondents cited "insufficient staff capacity" and "staff overstretched" as the top challenges.

61.   Many staff members were double, or triple hatted with the lead responsibility for multiple roles. In one case study country, the same individual had what was described as "regular duties" in addition to many critically important duties as both the OCHA Cash Coordinator and Gender Coordinator. These same patterns were observed in all case study countries.

62.   Similarly, stakeholders praised the high calibre of OCHA staff who were seen as extremely hard working, flexible and highly committed to the work they were seeking to support at country-level. OCHA staff focus groups brought forward the message regarding being under-resourced, implying that additional prioritization was necessary.

63.   Most feedback on areas for improvement shared one theme: OCHA is being called upon to be responsive to a multitude of mechanisms (e.g., ICCG, HCT, Clusters), within varied roles (e.g., supporter of RC/HC, donor, liaison) and within the context of highly challenging political scenarios at country-level. This was reported by interviewees as having resulted in a variety of unmet needs. The degree of, and type of, unmet needs differed depending on the case study country.

Fit-for-Purpose Lesson 3: In the face of escalating demands, an expansive mandate and staff already stretched, OCHA needs to prioritize and allocate resources strategically, based on a thorough assessment of needs and priorities in each context. This will involve identifying specific areas where OCHA can have the greatest impact and deprioritizing less critical activities. While factoring in

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[15] Advocating for (1) greater harmonization and less competition between actors (2) updated/alternate funding structures/approaches (3) context-specific coordination tools/systems.

coordination transaction costs, this could also include more strategic investment in partnerships with a focus on burden sharing. Additionally, OCHA should enhance staff capacity through training and support mechanisms and improve the duty of care for staff working in challenging environments. By taking these steps, OCHA can better support its staff and provide effective humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies.

V. Recommendations

64.   OIOS-IED makes five important recommendations, which OCHA has accepted.

Recommendation 1 (result C, D and E)

65.   Building on OCHA Strategic Plan 2023-2026, OCHA should review its approach and current role in country-level operationalization of global-level policies related to: (1) accountability to affected populations; (2) localization; and (3) Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. This should consider country-specific funding situations and other contextual factors. A new strategy on operationalizing each of these policies should include:

   a) Specific descriptions of the role(s) which OCHA country offices can opt to play based on their individual contexts;

   b) Specific information on OCHA approach to addressing associated challenges, including scenario planning that balances the tension between focusing solely on its core lifesaving mandate and delivering on additional commitments, given the increasing gap between needs and available funding; and

   c) Options for leveraging the DSRSG/RC/HC triple hatted functionality to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and promote durable solutions.

Indicator of achievement: Internal strategic documents which provide detailed-level guidance on country-level operationalization related to (1) (2) and (3). These documents should incorporate subparagraphs (a) to (c) above.

Recommendation 2 (result B and E)

66.   Building on ongoing efforts to simplify the HPC process and empower HCs to develop context-specific coordination and response solutions, OCHA should:

   a) Continue the HPC and ERC flagship reform processes, with a focus on identifying best practices and lessons learned. These insights should inform and support OCHA efforts to reduce inputs and outputs, and to adapt its coordination and response strategies to be people-centred, context-specific, and tailored to local needs and priorities;

   b) Continue to utilize established mechanisms to enhance transparency for evaluating the credibility and accuracy of the data collected during the HNO and HRP processes, to ensure that data is comparable on a global level and can inform funding decisions. The mechanism should consider the tension between securing access through government cooperation and maintaining OCHA neutrality.

Indicator of achievement: After action review findings that suggest partners are satisfied with the simplified HPC process; Revised HPC Quality Review process with strengthened/ appropriate indicators on data quality in HNO/HRP; Country team records of how they applied JIAF 2.0; Documentation of lessons learned of the "ERC flagship reform initiative".

Recommendation 3 (result B)

67.   Building on the successful utilization of CBPFs, OCHA should ensure that country-level offices have the resources to effectively manage the funds, monitor for results, and respond to project implementer expectations. This should include:

   a)   Follow 2022 CBPF Global Guidelines and monitor increasing inclusiveness and transparency in the allocation process, particularly by further involving local partners and sub-national level offices;

   b)   Strengthen capacity-development activities to support local and national NGOs, with a focus on improving their capacity to implement quality responses;

   c)   While balancing the need for fiduciary due diligence, simplification and other factors, monitor the implementation of the revised capacity assessment tool as per 2022 CBPF Global Guidelines, including further support to local and national NGOs factoring in their organization type specific needs.

Indicator of achievement: *Reports on the number of local and national NGOs that have received capacity-development support; Percentage of funding allocated to local and national partners (directly or as sub-partners); Feedback from local and national partners and sub-partners implementing CBPF funded projects on the support provided by OCHA in managing the CBPF funding.*

Recommendation 4 (results C and D)

68.   OCHA should continue efforts to address the challenges of multiple, parallel coordination mechanisms where they exist. This should include:

   a)   Further engagement with relevant UN agencies and stakeholders, including those at the highest political levels, to reassess the roles and responsibilities in the context of individual mandates with a focus on meeting the needs of populations affected by crises in the most neutral, efficient and effective manner possible;

   b)   In line with the "One UN" principle, this should be done incorporating the perspectives of those affected by crises;

   c)   Reassessing existing processes at HQ intended to support country-level implementation of agreed upon roles and priorities.

Indicator of achievement: A plan of action factoring in items (a) to (c); Documentation of stakeholder consultation; Updated processes, documents or standard operating procedures (SOPs) resolving multiple, parallel coordination mechanisms.

Recommendation 5 (result D and E)

69.   To ensure effective management of human resources, OCHA should:

   a)   Further develop strategies to improve staff retention and duty of care, including measures to address stress and burnout, and strengthen support for mental health and well-being;

   b)   Continue to implement, update, and monitor human resources policies and procedures that, within Secretariat policies, maximize support to staff and the organization.

Indicator of achievement: Improved staff retention rate; Staff feedback on support for mental health and well-being; Evidence of the implementation of updated human resources policies and procedures.

Annex 1: OCHA Management response on the draft report

United Nations   Nations Unies
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM   MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director,
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division, OIOS

DATE: 11 May 2023

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM:
DE: Mr. Martin Griffiths,
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian
Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

SUBJECT: Response to the draft report of the Office of Internal
OBJET: Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

This refers to your memo of 1 May 2023 (OIOS-2023-00716) by
which you transmitted the draft report of the Office of
Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the *Evaluation of the
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Subprogramme 2: Coordination of Humanitarian Action and
Emergency Response; Country-level Operations* for our review and
formal comments.

We have reviewed the draft report and are pleased to inform you
that we agree with its findings. Further, OCHA is pleased to
accept all of the five recommendations that OIOS has set forth.

In particular, I would like to highlight that recommendations
1, 2, 3 and 5 address issues that we are currently working on
as part of our Strategic Plan 2023-2026, our flagship reform
initiative, the recently revised County-Based Pooled Fund
Global Guidelines and the OCHA People Strategy 2022-2026.

I would like to thank the OIOS evaluation team for undertaking
an in-depth evaluation of OCHA's Subprogramme 2. I particularly
appreciate the extensive consultation the evaluation team
undertook with OCHA (including with Joyce and myself) and its
partners.

cc: Mr. Juan Carlos Peña, OIOS
    Ms. Menada Wind-Andersen, OCHA
    Ms. Kelly David, OCHA
    Mr. Assefa Bahta, OCHA