

Jack Jones's speech:

'Linking Response to Development'

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak about linking emergency relief and development. Particular thanks to ODI for arranging these seminars and to the All-Party Group on Overseas Development for hosting us here today.

There's a striking contrast, isn't there, between the horror and immediacy of the major disasters - the Tsunamis and the other earthquakes - and the less dramatic work of reconstruction. The

public eye often equates the UK's international development programme with images of emergency supplies, airlifts and emergency feeding programmes in refugee camps, rather than the long-term, often unsung, development work in which millions of people all over the world are involved day in and day out. I am also acutely aware of the so-called 'neglected disasters' and the creeping epidemics, of needless deaths from poverty, avoidable disease and chronic malnutrition which take place every day away relatively unseen.

So I suggest that “the response” (and certainly DFID’s response) to the Tsunami and to the Pakistan earthquake have highlighted more than ever the importance of making the link between humanitarian response to disasters, and the less dramatic, more long-term work of reconstruction and development.

After both disasters I think it is fair to say that a relatively successful relief effort was followed by a difficult transition to recovery and reconstruction.

This winter we still cannot be sure that survivors of the Pakistan earthquake will not continue to face hardship.

We know, after the Tsunami, that there must be a greater emphasis on supporting communities with their own relief and recovery priorities.

If we do relief work without thinking enough about future recovery and development we risk weakening the support mechanisms that local communities already have in place. We must also plan ahead while we are doing relief to

reduce the risks of future disasters and the vulnerability of disaster-prone communities.

I admit that this is not easy.

The emergency relief priority is, of course, to save lives.

But at the very least we must do our best to ensure that we 'do no harm' and do not undermine later recovery and development efforts.

Mr. Battle and his colleagues on the International Development Committee very clearly highlighted the indivisibility of relief,

recovery and development in their recent inquiry into humanitarian response.

So what are the main barriers to successfully linking relief and development, and what is DFID doing about these?

1. Funding

One such barrier can be the way we fund our operations.

We must be flexible.

We must avoid splitting emergency work into rigid phases- emergency relief, recovery and reconstruction often have to be done at the same time and should always be planned at the same time.

In DFID we try to extend our humanitarian response funds to bridge the gap between our immediate response work and the longer-term programmes of our country offices.

We think that livelihoods are pretty important. After both the Tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake we provided funding to help families re-build and start earning their own living again.

Going back a little further, I'm rather proud of having done dates and goats..... That was after the Bam earthquake in Iran – Boxing Day 2003. We and other donors and the Iranians quickly got the traditional humanitarian sectors covered – water and sanitation, health, shelter and so on. But no donor at first spotted the need to do something about livelihoods, to get the local economy back on its feet. All credit, not to us, but to the Iranians who pointed us to the critical importance of saving the local date crop and replacing dead livestock. To cut a long story short, we did help to save the date crop, and funded Action Against Hunger to do goats – and

it worked. It was both an emergency intervention and a boost to transitional recovery and part of the foundation for longer term reconstruction.

You may well be familiar with DFID's commitment to provide 10% of the amount allocated for emergency response to any major natural disaster to support measures to reduce the risks and impact of future disasters, where we can identify appropriate activities. So for every £100 we spend on disaster response, £10 is set aside for DRR work in the same country.

Of the £75 million we contributed in tsunami relief £7.5 million is going to Disaster Risk Reduction. Of the £58 million we committed to the Pakistan earthquake £5.8 million is going to DRR. And of the £5 million we spent in response to the Jogjakarta earthquake in Indonesia in May £500,000 will go on DRR.

2. Roles and coordination

Another obstacle to linking relief to development can simply be the way that international humanitarian and development practitioners are.

Often the agencies and departments dealing with response and recovery on the one hand and with development programmes on the other are different. So coordination in an emergency can be challenging.

DFID welcomes and encourages international efforts to get over this. The UN's work on clusters, including an early recovery cluster, shows that it is trying to address this.

And it is good that the (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNDP are looking more closely at how to coordinate their work better.

The expanded Central Emergency Response Fund (the CERF) is also now coming into its own. The Fund can plug gaps in emergency funding that aren't met in other ways, including in making links to development.

The UK Government, Hilary Benn in particular, has pioneered the expansion of the CERF and has pledged £40 million to it for 2006.

Through the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative donors generally have committed to

providing humanitarian assistance in ways that support recovery and long-term development.

Although GHD principles have not so far always been effectively put into action on the ground we are working towards them. Progress has been made.

Disaster Risk Reduction

I've mentioned disaster risk reduction several times. I make no apology for mentioning it again.

Disaster response is highly visible, attention grabbing. Disaster risk reduction is long term and low profile. But for every pound or dollar invested in disaster risk reduction between two and four pounds or dollars are returned in disaster impacts reduced or avoided.

The World Bank estimates the annual cost of natural disasters at US \$50 billion, with the poorest countries suffering much higher losses as a proportion of GDP. The income loss from disasters in the 1980s was eight times greater than in the 1960s. The World Bank also

estimates that \$40 billion invested in DRR would have prevented losses of \$280 billion in the 1990s.

The Stern report alone reminds us forcibly that climate change is likely to lead to more frequent climate-related disasters over the coming years.

DFID contributes to a range of international environmental and climate change initiatives - £118 million to the Global Environment Facility; £10 million over three years to the UN Climate

Change Convention's Special Climate Change Fund.

Development which does not take proper account of risks and vulnerabilities can increase the threat of disasters and their impact. On the other hand, where steps are taken to mitigate risks and reduce vulnerabilities, the impact of disasters can be reduced, or even avoided. For example, in the Chars area of Bangladesh, which suffers from regular river floods, programmes have included supporting livelihoods that can function even during floods. Households have been encouraged to construct

fenced-in plots for flood fish-farming – how to turn threat into opportunity.

We launched our new DFID disaster risk reduction in March this year. We assert that minimising disaster risks and vulnerabilities must be at the heart of humanitarian and development planning and that DFID needs to do more on this. Our goal is “to contribute to sustainable development through reducing the burden of disasters on the poor and most vulnerable”.

Fine words. What are we doing? Well, DFID offices in 15 vulnerable countries in Africa, Asia

and Latin America and the Caribbean now have staff concentrating on disaster risk reduction. They will incorporate disaster risk reduction into DFID's country development programmes.

We are training more DFID staff to be able to do this.

We also think that the international system needs to get better at reducing disaster risk. And we like to think we're putting our money where our mouth is. We're supporting the World Bank, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the ProVention Consortium and the

Red Cross movement – to the tune of £18.5 million.

We are also committed to helping NGOs with their DRR, especially national NGOs at community level. They are often the first line of response in any emergency, so it is vital they are empowered to tackle disasters risks. For example, before Hurricane Mitch, the communities along the Coyolate River in Guatemala had made a joint flood map, set up a high-rainfall alarm system and built evacuation shelters. The result was that they managed to avoid the worst of the Hurricane's impact. And

no lives were lost. With this in mind, we are providing a further £13 million to six NGOs to carry out research and practical work at community level in 14 countries.

Media

Lastly - the media.

Personally I'm a fan. The media is a force for good in raising awareness of poverty and neglected emergencies. It also holds us in government and the international agencies to account – rightly.

Some say that the media can also help fuel the perception of disasters as short-term problems requiring a quick fix, rather than needing a longer-term approach.

Some also say that this can in turn create unrealistic expectations with the public and put pressure on donors and agencies on the ground to produce visible results quickly. Well I'm all for pressure to produce visible results quickly! We respond quickly anyway – not media driven but, I like to think, jointly with the media.

And if there is any distortion or exaggeration then we in the humanitarian and development community must take at least some of the blame for this because it is down to us to get the right message across – we certainly have enough press officers.....

I'm in no doubt that press coverage is overwhelmingly a force for good, a welcome partner for us humanitarian and development practitioners. Distortion and exaggeration, if they happen, are far outweighed by serious, sincere reporting and campaigning. Write on!

Conclusion

To conclude, donors, the UN, other INGOs and NGOs must work together to put risk reduction at the heart of humanitarian responses and development work, particularly in disaster-prone countries.

DFID's 10% initiative is one way of doing this, but there are others.

Funding must support the link between disasters and development. Donors have made a lot of progress in this area, but much remains to be done.

The media is vital. It has an important and positive role in reporting on disasters. We should recognise this and do more to foster general understanding of how we can effectively support both humanitarian and development work in a disaster.

Thank you.

Questions?

