



Editorial

François Grünewald

Initial estimates show that 2013 will probably be the hottest year in recent decades. In the temperate zone 2013 has been marked by numerous unseasonal phenomena and major flooding and it has also been a year of extreme weather events, such as the terrifyingly powerful tornadoes which hit the United States of America and the drought that devastated parts of China. These events have a very powerful impact on the most vulnerable people in the poorest countries, whether in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa or Mozambique, and the links between climate disorder and increased conflict are well established.

These worrying changes raise questions for humanitarian actors, both in terms of their mandate and their methods of action. Having long campaigned to help the weakest people faced with man-made and natural violence to express themselves, we must now take into account the environmental origin of this violence. But are the vulnerabilities that we combat in crisis contexts not partly caused by our way of living and consuming...? And if they are, what are we doing about it?

A certain number of initiatives of varying and complementary nature and ambition are beginning to emerge. Much remains to be done and the humanitarian sector no doubt has a lot to learn from other sectors. But it is quite possible that it has a lot to give due to the fact that it works in such close proximity with those most affected by these global changes. We felt that it was important to take stock of these changes and asked a number of humanitarian actors working on these issues to contribute to this special issue.

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Humanitarian space

A network to help humanitarian organisations to take environmental issues into account more effectively: why is such a network necessary and what are its objectives?

The Humanitarian Environment Network

Created due to a common need to discuss and improve the integration of environmental considerations into humanitarian action and through the impetus given by Groupe URD and a number of other organisations, the Humanitarian Environment Network (*Réseau Environnement Humanitaire*) currently includes members of several French-speaking organisations like Action Contre la Faim, the French Red Cross, Médecins du Monde, Médecins Sans Frontières Suisse, Solidarités International, Terre des Hommes Lausanne, Triangle Génération Humanitaire, the Joint UNEP / OCHA Environment Unit and Groupe URD. This article is the first time the network has expressed itself publicly. It presents the mission and objectives that the members have fixed for themselves as well as the results of a review of progress made, remaining needs and difficulties encountered. With the foundations now in place, collective learning is underway.

The creation of the network

The multiple links between the environment and crises

Climate change, pollution, the water crisis, the gradual depletion of fossil fuels, deforestation, conflicts over resources... environmental issues increasingly affect and raise questions for humanitarian actors.

First of all, humanitarian operations themselves can have a negative impact on the natural environment due to the production of waste (used oil, medical waste, electronic waste, etc.), increased pressure on natural resources like water and wood in areas where their programmes are conducted, and greenhouse gas emissions due to the international transportation of people and equipment. Due to their activities, organisations are in the front line and able to see and testify about the consequences of environmental degradation which further reduce people's already weakened resilience. The perspective of the rising price of fuel for vehicles, electrical generators and the cold chain is forcing us to question the dependence of our programmes on this fossil resource which is being depleted in order to avoid energy becoming more and more expensive to the detriment of aid itself. More generally, increasingly scarce natural resources, including metals, indirectly affect the cost of equipment used, raising ques-

tions about consumption. Lastly, the incentives to take the environment into consideration are also external due to national regulations of both home countries and countries where operations are carried out, the changing demands of certain donors, increased awareness of both donors and partners, the development of sector-based norms for more environmentally-friendly practices, etc.

The need to move forward collectively on these issues

However, humanitarian organisations are often reticent about integrating an environmental approach at the institutional level. They give several reasons for this. For example, they argue that environmental considerations are not part of their mandate and that the environment is an issue for rich countries. They also have difficulty combining their objectives of efficiency and effectiveness with additional cross-cutting demands like the environment. They feel it is a technical area of expertise, and they sometimes do not know where to start or how to deal with it. Lastly, they do not feel sufficiently prepared to be accountable or to communicate on these issues.

Since 2010, Groupe URD and UNEP/OCHA have facilitated training courses¹ on integrating the environment in the humanitarian sector. These have been an opportunity for actors to discuss these questions and to establish this subject as an integral part of the quality approach that they have been engaged in for numerous years. It was during these training courses which were run in both western and crisis-affected countries (Chad, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe and South Africa) that organisations expressed the need to create a discussion group on this subject. Created in April 2012, the network aims to promote the integration of the environment among member organisations and more broadly throughout the humanitarian sector, by encouraging collective learning and healthy emulation via the sharing of experiences and ideas and the search for solutions to shared problems.

Collective learning

The organisation and mission of the network

The members of this network belong to organisations like Action contre la Faim (ACF), the French Red Cross, Médecins du Monde, Médecins Sans Frontières Suisse, Solidarités International, Triangle GH, Terre des Hommes

Lausanne, UNEP/OCHA and Groupe URD. The network meets for three or four half days per year, taking turns to meet in the premises of the different organisations. In order to encourage the broadest possible participation and in order to limit our carbon footprint, there is always the possibility to take part remotely via video-conference. Participants include the permanent members but also representatives of member organisations involved in the topics being discussed. New organizations are welcome to take part and join the network.

The network's mission is to promote the integration of the environment both among member organisations and throughout the humanitarian sector. In order to do this, it has given itself three objectives:

- To encourage experience sharing via a shared library (manuals, lessons learned, etc.), thematic meetings and the writing and publication of summary notes aimed at the wider sector;
- To conduct studies, develop tools which are adapted to the needs of the sector and which can be adopted by non-specialists;
- To establish the legitimacy of the network and conduct advocacy work with the directors of the member organisations and other actors, such as donors, to encourage the integration of environmental considerations throughout the sector.

As we will see in greater detail below, the first meetings allowed the members to consolidate the mission and objectives of the network and assess the current level of integration of the environment among member organisations. The following meetings were based on specific themes (such as carbon footprints and waste management). In addition to these structured meetings, each member uses the network to: share information (e.g. planning a conference which might interest the other members); get help (with contacts or know-how); and suggest bilateral discussions of a shared topic when the opportunity arises (e.g. having a member of the network make a presentation at an event), etc.

A very informative review

A review of the level of integration of the environment within member organisations of the network was carried out in late 2012 and early 2013. This study showed that member organizations have all already instigated different activities related to this topic. This is the result of awareness about a changing external context which is increasingly affecting populations and also a desire to be coherent with NGO values (principles of Do No Harm, of fairness and participatory processes) and to lead by exam-

ple. There has also been a gradual acceptance that the quality of programmes, the sustainability and autonomy aimed for, and the preservation of the natural environment are interdependent.

Changes have taken place in certain sectors, such as the reduction of the environmental impact within headquarters (recycling of waste, reduced consumption of water, energy and consumables (paper, cartridges, etc.) and greater attention given to the issue of professional travel, whether international or home to workplace travel). Certain organizations have also evaluated their carbon footprint and their dependence on fossil fuels. These have resulted in actions to reduce emissions, consumption and the production of waste. In target countries, some organisations are working on using cleaner energy and improving their energy efficiency for the production of electricity, cooking and travel. Agricultural practices which preserve the environment are also put in place such as the use of traditional seeds, irrigation techniques which use less water, agro-ecological techniques and the use of compost. Lastly, certain projects have an explicitly environmental component:

environmental education, environmental health, watershed management or improved stoves to reduce firewood use.

Generally, however, these efforts are relatively recent. They are often the result of motivated individuals and there is still not

enough institutional awareness. An environmental approach is not generalised throughout all the functions of the organisation or all its projects, but pilot projects are conducted in the field (energy, waste, environmental health, etc.). The main barriers are lack of time or skills, resistance to change within organisations and insufficient support from decision-makers (Heads of NGOs, donors) which is essential to integrate a cross-cutting issue which affects every function. Even though they often directly witness environmental impacts and the deterioration of the natural environment, and their effects on the societies concerned, there is still a lot to do to raise awareness among staff and partners in operational contexts.

According to the members of the network, several elements would help to make progress. The identification of environmental norms in the countries where operations take place and the analysis of present and potential demands from institutional and private donors would improve understanding of the context, improve preparation, and would improve positioning as a consequence. Institutional integration of the environment (i.e. via a charter or an environment policy or positioning in relation to climate change and sustainable development) is an essential pre-requisite in order to be able to make pro-

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gress with concrete, long-term changes. Relatively simple measures at the headquarters level would allow impacts to be controlled and reduced². In terms of programmes, measures which can be taken include raising awareness among collaborators, providing practical solutions and techniques to improve waste management and change energy intensive practices (eco-driving techniques, reduced use of air conditioning, improved insulation of buildings, production of renewable energy), improved logistical orientation for responsible local purchasing, environmentally-friendly agricultural techniques, etc.

The first of its kind, this review provides an overview of the level of integration of environmental considerations among network members, and provides key information to guide activities, facilitate experience sharing and encourage leverage between members.

Theme-based meetings for in-depth discussion

The priority themes that were decided at the review will be tackled at theme-based meetings. During each meeting, short presentations are made by people who have experience or ideas to share on the subject. When possible, a specialist on the subject is also invited to speak. Open discussion then leads to a summary and a review of key ideas and good practices. Possible follow-up activities may also be decided. The discussions are recorded in operation-focused summary notes which are accessible on the Groupe URD website³.

The meeting which took place in May 2013 dealt with carbon/greenhouse gas emission assessments. ACF and MSF Switzerland – who have carried out assessments of part of their activities – made presentations, as did a consultant from “Le Geste Environnemental” research institute. The summary note which was put together after this exchange includes definitions and regulatory aspects, the specific experiences of ACF, MSF Switzerland and Groupe URD, and good practices and recommendations aimed at other organisations who would like to carry out an assessment of this kind. One of the conclusions is that it would be very useful to produce a sector-based operational guide to carrying out assessments of greenhouse gas emissions in humanitarian organisations. This could be produced by the network.

During a previous meeting, a student came to present work which she had carried out for MSF Switzerland on energy and using photovoltaic solar power in place of diesel generators in the sub-Saharan region. The last thematic meeting, which took place on 4 October, 2013 dealt with waste management, and the next meeting, planned for December, will look at environmental impact assessments.

What members get from the network

A year and a half after its first meeting, the network is resolutely engaged in carrying out the mission that it has chosen for itself. The review was an opportunity for each member to think about their own practices and how much they take the environment into account. It allowed members to look at what is already done internally, at areas which still need to be improved and adapted, and at competencies and know-how that exist in other organizations which could be useful for them.

While awareness about environmental issues and the need to take them into account is quite limited and uneven at different institutional levels, the network makes it possible to establish close contact between representatives from a variety of organisations who are active on this issue and who are sometimes relatively isolated within their own organisations. It gives them greater weight internally.

Over and above the sharing of experiences and knowledge, the existence of the network is also a source of inspiration for organisations, who see what others are doing and feel reinforced and comforted in their commitment towards more environmentally-friendly practices. Thus, for

The review provides an overview of the level of integration of environmental considerations among network members, and provides key information to guide activities, facilitate experience sharing and encourage leverage between member

Antoine Delepière of Tdh Lausanne, “the network allows Tdh to compare experiences, share practices with other actors engaged in an environmental approach and integrate the lessons

learned by other actors. It also improves our advocacy position for the integration of an environmental approach with regard to the revision of our strategic plan”.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, the network will continue to strengthen collective learning among its members, but also beyond. It will aim to incorporate new members to further increase sources of experience and competencies. If funds are mobilised, it also plans to develop tools and carry out studies to respond to the key needs of the sector in order to support organisations in their efforts to apply an environmental approach.

Lastly, the network has been approached by international actors for whom it has served as an example, notably for a network which is currently being established and led by the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. Some of its members, such as Groupe URD, have been involved in this international network since the beginning, with the aim of

being a driving force and sharing the competencies of the French-speaking network and establishing links between the different initiatives.

*Text written by the members of the
Humanitarian Environment Network*

*For more information about the network,
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¹ The partnership with UNEP has existed since 2010. Beginning in the autumn of 2013, these training courses will be run with the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU).

² For example, carrying out a carbon footprint assessment and putting in place indicators to monitor and reduce emissions, defining principles and recommendations for responsible purchasing, communicating, training, etc.

³ <http://www.urd.org/A-network-of-NGOs-committed-to>

« Action contre la Faim » and the environment

“Action contre la Faim’s objectives are access to water and the eradication of malnutrition. These will only be achieved in an environment that is preserved, so we have been concerned with environmental issues for some time. A series of studies carried out from 2009 made it possible to identify support activities, and particularly logistics, as major causes of environmental impact : greenhouse gas emissions due to transportation, the indirect impact of products and services purchased, the running of premises and what they consume, etc.

These studies led to the drawing up of an “environmental agenda” which was validated by the board of directors at the end of 2010. Via this agenda, ACF recognized the organisation’s responsibility for its direct and indirect impacts, and made five commitments: responsible purchasing, quantitatively and qualitatively improved energy consumption, controlling the environmental footprint of freight, sustainable management of waste, and communicating about these commitments and promoting them with all our partners.

Following the partial achievement of these objectives, a study was launched in autumn of 2013 to find new ways of making improvements in keeping with the priorities of the humanitarian community. The Réseau Humanitaire is both a relay and a precious source of inspiration for this objective”. *Thibault Laconde, Head of sustainable development projects, ACF*

« Terre des Hommes Lausanne » and the environment

“In its general vision of applying children’s rights at the international level, as far as possible, the Fondation Terre des hommes (Tdh) does its utmost to integrate the demands of sustainable development (including the environmental approach). Respecting children’s rights today (almost 50% of the world population) is the best guarantee of the capacity of future generations to rise to the challenges of the future in terms of survival and development.

Taking the environment into account in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects is, to some extent, a way of adopting an environmental approach. Tdh’s environmental approach aims to reduce the negative impact of the organisation and its programmes, optimising the use of energy, by conserving natural cycles (carbon, nitrogen, water, minerals, etc.) and conserving evolutionary potential (biodiversity)”. *Antoine Delepière, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist, Tdh Lausanne*

A team invested in improving humanitarian practices and active in preserving their natural environment

Groupe URD's headquarters is located in an area of small mountains in the Drôme Provençale region, facing the Mont Ventoux. This isolated site is surrounded by a diversified natural environment which is rich in resources. It is sometimes subjected to climatic hazards which destabilize the environment and which can lead to water shortages, forest fires and landslides.

The exposure to natural risks that can be seen in the numerous countries where Groupe URD operates is echoed in some of the phenomena present in the area where we are located. Faced with the growing number of climate-related issues and the conflicts linked to access to resources in numerous countries, the preservation of the natural environment is essential. Thus, in addition to promoting the integration of the environment in the humanitarian sector for several years, Groupe URD has tried to be coherent by reducing its environmental footprint through a number of technological and behavioral choices.

In order to deal with scarce water resources: reduced consumption, recycling and rainwater harvesting

The isolated location means that it is not possible to be connected to the mains water network. The water therefore comes from a spring, which is used for domestic uses (drinking water and sanitation). The spring's rate of flow varies throughout the year and there can be shortages. Thus, in order to ensure that water is continuously available, even for events involving a hundred people, a complementary system of rainwater harvesting has been put in place, collecting water from the roofs and filling a network of tanks.

In addition, as part of an integrated approach to risk management, there is an agreement with the local fire brigade giving them access to the water tanks should this ever be necessary.

Saving water is also an important issue, and this is promoted by raising awareness among the people on the site and by the existence of specific installations.

- Dry toilets have been built, helping to reduce the consumption of water considerably while allowing excreta to be used to structure and fertilise soil. For pedagogical reasons, two types of dry toilet have been built:
 - *compost toilets*: treatment of excreta enriched with carbon-rich matter (sawdust) by composting.
 - *dehydration toilets*: separation of urine and faeces at the source; urine can be used directly as a fertilizer, and the faeces are treated by dehydration and the addition of alkaline matter (wood ash).
- A phyto-purification sanitation system has also been put in place with a series of three sanitation ponds in which macrophytes are planted. This contributes to recharging the water table and is part of a living ecosystem.
- Plants are watered as much as possible with drip irrigation systems.

An ecological swimming pool uses stabilised spring water treated by phyto purification (macrophytes).

Managing our energy footprint

An office like ours needs to fit into the landscape while using energy-efficient building techniques. We have chosen to invest in installations which are both innovative, ecological and cost-effective (return on investment), thus limiting our greenhouse gas emissions and our dependence on nuclear energy.

A two-level strategy has been adopted:

- Insulation of buildings:
 - When the old buildings were being renovated, a lot of work was done to insulate the walls and roofs. An extension has been built using *Monomur*¹ bricks. The training and conference hall has been insulated using ecological materials (lime, hemp and straw).



© Groupe URD

Dehydration toilets



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Training room

- The latest building that was built is *bioclimatic*, with a wood frame, straw insulation, a green roof and double glazing. This optimal insulation ensures that carbon is stored (in the straw).

- A variety of heating technologies, based on renewable energy:

- *Solar panels* provide hot water and heating from March to November.
- For the winter months, a *wood burning boiler* has been installed which uses a local supplier of little used forestry products (wood chips). This initiative prompted other people living in the valley to do the same which allowed the overall carbon footprint to be reduced by mutualising transportation.
- Lastly, recent work to improve the insulation of roofs has included the integration of *photovoltaic solar panels*.



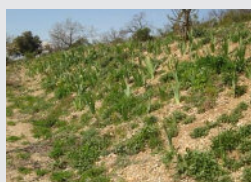
© Groupe URD

Green roof



© Groupe URD

Wood burning boiler



© Groupe URD

Plants to counter erosion

Reducing erosion

Our location in a mountainous area means that we have to take into account the risk of rainwater surface run-off which leads to erosion and loss of soil fertility, and reduces water table recharge. In order to preserve these essential natural resources, irises and other bulbs have been planted to help stabilise the soil. These also contribute to atmospheric carbon sequestration.

Carbon assessment and corrective measures

Groupe URD's activities in a variety of crisis situations which are directly linked to climate change make us all the more aware of the need to take appropriate measures to reduce our impact on the climate.

The carbon footprint of certain events, such as the 2009 Autumn School on Humanitarian Aid on "Mainstreaming the environment in humanitarian action", and several training courses on the same subject was calculated and offset through contributions to organisations involved in the preservation of the environment in countries of the South.

In addition, we have begun to calculate the overall carbon footprint of the organisation. An assessment of greenhouse gas emissions was carried out in 2012, with the objective of evaluating emissions, establishing priorities, establishing ways to reduce them and raising awareness among aid actors. We used a methodology developed and tested in the field by the GERES² so that we would be able to recommend a methodology which was adapted to the constraints of the sector after testing it for ourselves.

Training, sharing and promoting

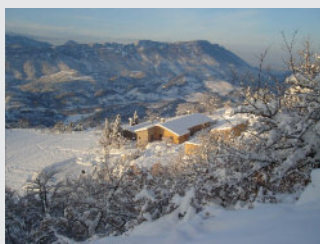
Each year, a large number of professionals visit the headquarters to take part in training courses, work sessions and conferences. During these events, the site is used to raise awareness about and explain environmentally-friendly practices which can be copied and adapted to different contexts.

It is very important to us that there should be coherence between what we practice and what we preach both abroad and in France, and this is achieved through the sharing of experiences, awareness raising and support for innovation.

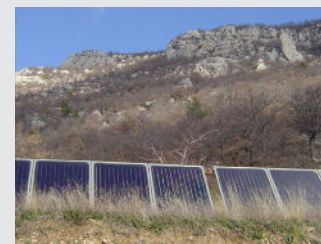
François Grünewald - Executive director, Groupe URD
Blanche Renaudin - Researcher: Environment, Groupe URD

¹ Large, alveolate terra cotta bricks which insulate and regulate the temperature.

² GERES : Groupe Energie Renouvelable Environnement et Solidarités.



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La Fontaine des marins, Groupe URD's headquarters in Plaisians (26170)

Crises and vulnerabilities

Governance and environmental degradation in Haiti

Richener Noël

For several decades, Haiti has endured major environmental degradation caused by the anarchic occupation of certain high-risk areas, the spontaneous appearance of new neighbourhoods, poor waste management and the proliferation of buildings outwith all legal and institutional frameworks. There are, nevertheless, a number of authorities and laws which have been established to protect the physical environment in which the Haitian population lives. This institutionalisation does not appear to be part of an approach based on results and effectiveness aiming to halt the process of general deforestation, destruction of watersheds and erosion. This article argues that Haiti's poor environmental management is the result of a lack of a sufficiently developed environmental policy and mechanisms for the coordination, facilitation and intervention of the different institutions in the environmental sector.

Environmental degradation in Haiti

The deterioration of the environment in Haiti is a widely recognised fact: the country is said to be in a permanent state of vulnerability (in terms of the risk of floods, landslides, pollution, erosion, etc.)¹.

In rural areas, the most worrying factors are deforestation, bad cultivation practices, the splitting up of land, erosion and the degradation of watersheds. Vegetation cover fell to 2% of the land area in 2012 (around 15% if we take tree cultivation into account)². The degradation of watersheds linked to deforestation is the main cause of floods which cause a great deal of both material and human damage when there is heavy rainfall³. 80% of the country is mountainous with slopes that vary from shallow to steep, small valleys and easily-flooded coastal plains. This can be seen from the results of the different natural disasters which have affected these areas in the last decade. In 2004, when there was major torrential rain, several thousand people were killed or went missing in the *sections communales* of Mapou, Belle-Anse, Bodarie (South-east) and Fonds-Verrettes (West). Damage on a similar scale took place in 2008 in Artibonite, the west and the south, after a series of cyclones. The heavy rainfall in October 2012 with the passage of cyclone Sandy also affected the rural economy (notably in the agriculture and livestock sectors), and consequently affected the livelihoods of small farmers.

Haiti is in a permanent state of vulnerability

Regarding the management of urban space, the situation is also judged to be unsustainable and difficult. Since the 1960s, massive internal migration and population increase has taken place. Cities have grown beyond their historical limits due to the uncontrolled flow of people to peripheral zones and the establishment of shanty towns. Cities have grown without any genuine urban planning. New neighbourhoods have spread and generally become more densely populated without being properly linked up with pre-existing urban frameworks, which increases urban exclusion (in terms of distribution of services), environmental degradation (with the destruction of the physical landscape) and maintains cities in a state of under-development. The country is struggling with the "urban transition" that has taken place since the second half of the 20th century⁴. The urbanization process is a major challenge and Haitian cities have not had the means to manage a structured transition from small "traditional" towns to major (urban) conglomerates. Almost all the main towns (Saint-Marc, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Cayes, Léogâne, etc.) have experienced floods that resulted in great human loss and major material damage.

In the last fifty years, there has been a direct link between the socio-economic and economic situation and the environmental deterioration in the country. The Duvalier regime (1957-1986) was an unenlightened "totalitarian" dictatorship. In order to perpetuate its reign, the state exerted a repressive form of control throughout the country, notably through the presence of the "tontons-macoutes" (militias made up of hundreds of thousands of men). On the socio-economic front, the situation was characterized by economic decline which led to increased poverty and the deterioration of people's living conditions. Peasant farmers, in despair, left rural areas en masse. Due to the lack of capacity of towns to absorb these

people, it was therefore under the Duvalier regime that today's major shanty towns began to take form. After the fall of the dictatorship (1986), political

instability, marked by successive coups d'état, led to greater economic decline and the suspension of public policy and action. This situation contributed to the withdrawal of public institutions from the control and governance of the country. Even within public bodies there was often a lack of understanding of public action. Local authorities were often neglected. Problems of governance were often made worse by corruption which prevented institutions from meeting the needs of the population. In 2012, Haiti was ranked among the countries with the highest levels of corruption in the world⁵. The

process of environmental degradation is therefore linked to the socio-political context that has weakened the country.

Other environmental issues that are not dealt with in this article (such as sanitation and natural resource management) confirm this difficult environmental situation in Haiti. Indeed, since the sixties there have been continual calls for urgent action.

Haitian environmental legislation

Haitian environmental law is very rich and covers a range of aspects such as the protection of soil and trees, pollution, buildings, pests, natural resources, territorial planning, etc. The majority of environmental regulations were produced during the 20th century, particularly from the 1960s. The agronomist, Jean André Victor listed more than a hundred laws, decree-laws, decrees and orders promulgated up till 1995, which deal with every aspect of the environment. The Haitian Collective for the Protection of the Environment and Sustainable Development (COHPEDA) produced a compilation of two hundred Haitian legal texts on the environment in 1998. There is also a Chronological Index of Haitian Legislation (1804-2000), which was published in 2002 by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which lists 140 laws concerning the environment in its Environmental Law section.

More recently, the Decree on Environmental Management and the Regulation of Citizens' Behaviour for Sustainable Development (2006) has introduced new legislation which makes the state, local authorities, civil society and citizens responsible for protecting the environment. It has made the fight to preserve and restore the environment a shared responsibility that concerns all national, regional, municipal and local institutions and authorities. The environment is seen as a national heritage that needs to be preserved in order for the country to survive.

Institutional management of the environment

A large number of institutions are engaged in the domain of the environment. The Ministry of the Environment was created in 1995. Its fundamental mission is to reduce environmental vulnerability, increase the resilience of communities to natural disasters and external economic crises which affect the environment, improve the housing, hygiene and security conditions of the population, formulate and implement environmental law, and orientate public policy in terms of environmental management.

Other ministries such as those of "Public works, Transport and Communications", "Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development", "Public Health" and "Planning" also have environmentally-related roles. Their organic laws define roles and subordinate authorities which are more or less directly or indirectly connected to environmental protection.

On another level are institutions with national, regional or local reach which are dependent on these ministries involved in activities directly or indirectly related to the environment. This is the case of the *Organisme de surveillance et d'Aménagement du Morne-Hôpital*, a local organisation which is responsible for restoring the environment of Morne-Hôpital (OSAMH), the *Organisme de Développement de la Vallée de l'Artibonite* (ODVA) which acts at a more regional level and the *Service d'hygiène publique* (national).

At yet another level are local authorities (Municipal Authorities and Boards of Section communales – CASEC), who legally should play a role in the daily management of the local environment. They have broad discretion in terms of territorial, urban and environmental matters.

To what extent are laws enforced?

It is clear however that environmental protection laws are not enforced and have not been integrated into an operational framework. The country is not being taken care of despite the risks identified by the authorities themselves⁶. The state, for example, campaigns without much success, for the protection of certain protected areas, but in general, the abusive cutting of trees is neither reprimanded nor controlled in keeping with these wishes. There is no specific body which controls fishing and hunting.

The institutions envisaged by the law are either non-existent or dysfunctional. The failure to apply the law can partly be explained by a combination of institutional, political and administrative factors. Of these, we can mention the lack of coordination, the inability to act and the lack of an effective national policy for environmental matters.

Lack of organisation and coordination

In terms of the non-application of environmental regulations established by the state, Holly⁷ describes a lack of organisation which hampers any harmonisation of public action. He argues that the absence of coordination between the different institutions, the overlapping of mandates and their lack of clarity do not favour a policy based on results. Several institutions take care of the same

issue but without any coordination between them. This is a very common problem when the activities of local authorities cross over with those of the government due to the poor distribution of roles. It is also a problem when two government institutions work in the same field. This can currently be seen in Morne-Hôpital. This area, which overlooks the Haitian capital, is deteriorating due to the uncontrolled settlement of large numbers of people. Despite laws protecting the site, the state and the local authorities have been ineffective. The OSAMH, which should legally be the technical branch of the state, is not given support. Under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Authorities, it does not receive help from the Ministry of the Environment to carry out its mission. The latter conducts its own operations. The lack of cooperation between the different ministries and local authorities is one of the reasons why, despite the state's apparent mobilization via laws and institutions, environmental degradation is not being stopped.

Public opinion in Haiti sometimes denounces certain authorities which are created simply with the goal of weakening another in order to transfer the responsibility for certain resources to bodies that are under the state's influence. This problem is often mentioned with regard to the *Service Métropolitain de Collecte de Résidus Solides* (SMCRS) which, legally, is an inter-municipal authority responsible for refuse collection, while municipal authorities are in charge of sweeping, piling and bins. But in reality, the SMCRS is a central government body which receives the majority of the state budget for this sector, to the detriment of municipal authorities who are weakened as a result. It sometimes oversteps its area of action and takes the place of municipal authorities.

Institutions, therefore, often do not complement each other.

The inability of state institutions responsible for the environment to take action

The majority of institutions involved in Haitian public administration are not involved in a process of rationalisation of public action. This is the case for the environment sector. They do not have the human or financial means or the political reach to achieve the objectives they are given and do not have the expected impacts. They appear to function, to the extent that they are assigned their budgets, but they do not carry out their functions on the ground. Their budgets are not always assigned based on priorities, the means available or the objectives pursued. Generally, they have become unproductive bureaucracies. This is the case of the *Office National du Cadastre* (ONACA) which has operated for several decades without any visi-

bility. The situation is the same for the *Institut National de Réforme Agraire* (INARA). The only form of action of most institutions is the conducting of limited and unconnected projects (funded by international donors or the state's investment budget). This project-based method of action and investment does not allow them to be continuously present in the field or to innovate. For example, the OSAMH has not received any funds from the state's investment fund for more than two years, and, as such, has been rendered more or less dysfunctional. The lack of action of these institutions goes a long way to explaining the state of the country: all they do is perpetuate their own existence.



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Occupation of the banks of a ravine in Port-au-Prince

The lack of an (operational) national policy on the environment

The lack of an environmental policy is obvious when the state is unable to integrate the actions of state and non-state institutions into a single response to environmental problems. It is perhaps this situation that brought about the Decree of 2006 mentioned above. It is supposed to favour the definition of unified public and national action for the protection of the environment, involving action by citizens and public and non-public institutions. The problem is that this Decree has not yet been implemented. Only three bodies from the Decree are currently being created: the *Observatoire de l'Environnement et des Vulnérabilités*, set up in 2008, but whose organic law has not yet

been voted and whose existence has not had any significant impact for the time being; the *Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement du Territoire* (CIAT), which corresponds to the COTIME planned in the Decree of 2006, but none of the considerations justifying the

Decree are mentioned in the legal document founding the CIAT, which shows that this is a separate project; and the *Agence nationale des Aires protégées*, which is in the process of being set up. The different institutions which have been set up have been in response to short-term and partial needs rather than to implement general, definitive and long-term solutions.

The different institutions which have been set up respond more to short-term or partial needs rather than general, definitive and long-term needs

The lack of monitoring and continuity means that each new management team has to go back to square one, ignoring what has already been done, or has to make concessions, making rules more flexible rather than applying them. This was seen in a study of Morne-Hôpital⁸. Each time, the state had to redefine the limits of the protected area that it itself had established, revise bans due to the lack of means at its disposal to enforce the law, and make concessions on vital decisions. In numerous cases, new laws are put in place without any reference to previous decisions, resulting in incoherence and uncertainty.

Conclusion

The state should show leadership with regard to the environment by strengthening the main institution in the field, the Ministry of the Environment, which, with the right tools, could orient, control, reinforce and sanction the actions of each actor. The creation of a large number of autonomous authorities with very complicated organisational charts is to be avoided. Rather, technical units should be created under the hierarchical control of the Ministry. This will make decision-making easier, will reduce the digressions in the flow of communication and will reinforce the responsibility of the Ministry. The environment-related activities of other Ministries should also be overseen by the Ministry of the Environment.

This environmental management system would redefine the place of local authorities who have been sidelined in terms of environmental management. They have developed a wait and see attitude in relation to the central government's monopolizing tendencies, each time attempting to create environmental authorities which are directly answerable to it. The efforts of the government in recent years to establish departmental authorities have not allowed local territorial management to be established, this being the "natural" mission of local authorities. The strengthening of environmental governance in Haiti requires the rehabilitation of local authorities and should be envisaged in terms of action, that is to say, based on an approach which spans all levels from the local to the national. The idea should be to focus on what needs to be protected and managed based on the nearest decision-making body, before moving up to the national bureaucracy. State policy should thus encourage the instigation of local authority decision-making mechanisms as the initial level of environmental action. This method will allow national representatives to oversee and be responsible for those who take action at the local level. In order to establish local level control and management it is necessary to make the nearest public authority responsible.

It is important to point out that improving Haiti's environment is a very ambitious project which requires the involvement of every sector of society. The subject of this article - environmental governance - is only one of the

main issues which need to be tackled in a more general process. Other important issues include the environmental education of citizens, increasing the responsibility of private organizations and territorial planning.

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¹ Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement du Territoire (CIAT), 2009.

² Bellande Alex (2009). « Impact socioéconomique de la dégradation des terres en Haïti » - United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC 2009).

³ United States Agency for International Development (USAID 2006). Environmental vulnerabilities in Haiti: conclusions and recommendations.

⁴ See: Holly Gérald et al (1999). Les problèmes environnementaux de la région métropolitaine de Port-au-Prince, Commission pour la commémoration de la ville de Port-au-Prince. Goulet Jean, (2011). Le défi urbain en Haïti ». In « Le défi haïtien : Économie, dynamique sociopolitique et migration.

⁵ <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/results/>

⁶ On quarries, for example, see: Bureau des Mines et de l'Énergie (BME) (1998). Les carrières de sable: richesse ou plaie ? La problématique de l'exploitation des carrières dans le département de l'Ouest. In Holly et al (op. cit.).

⁷ *Op. cit.*

⁸ Noël Richener (2012). "Reconstruction and the Environment in Haiti: Morne L'Hôpital - a case of collective denial" (in French), http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/Groupe_URD_Rapport_Morne_Hopital_Mars_2013-2.pdf

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Anarchic occupation of the hillsides of Morne-Hôpital

Natural Resources and Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities in Afghanistan

Shamim Niazi

This article summarizes how natural resources, such as water, land, forests, and extractives can maximize peacebuilding opportunities in Afghanistan. It also reviews the linkages which exist between natural resources and peacebuilding and how Afghanistan can achieve sustainable peace through the appropriate use of natural resources. The last three decades of war and continuous insecurity have damaged the Afghan social fabric and government structures and have caused economic turmoil. Despite a huge amount of aid from the international community, Afghanistan is still struggling to achieve enduring peace and stability. There is fear that, once the international forces have left, Afghanistan will again become a battle field for regional powers. However, recent assessments of natural resources have made both the people of Afghanistan and the international community optimistic that their effective use could lead not only to economic, social, political and environmental growth, but also to sustainable peace.

Since the establishment of the Afghan Transitional Government in 2001, fundamental reforms in a plethora of national sectors ranging from oil and gas to infrastructure building and agriculture have taken place. A new system of governance and an overhaul of planning and decision-making processes (with assistance from the international community) are helping to build a new Afghanistan. Today, natural resources are seen as a major opportunity to provide solutions to ongoing development and economic growth problems. Recent studies of natural resources, such as oil, gas, copper, iron and gemstones suggest there is potential for economic growth which would make it possible to overcome challenges in relation to development and insecurity.

Afghanistan's natural resources - its land, water, forests and mineral deposits - are critical to the country's prospects for a peaceful and prosperous future. Effective natural resource management can contribute to conflict prevention. By creating structures and rules for managing and sharing natural resources, natural resource management brings order, predictability and trust to situations where otherwise competition and conflicting interests would be rife. More than 80% of people in Afghanistan rely on natural resources for their livelihood. And yet, until 2007, the government of Afghanistan (GoA) did not consider the environment sector independently and did not provide sufficient resources to mainstream environmen-

tal sustainability across government. A number of high-profile development projects in recent years have been shown to be unsustainable or very costly, often due to their failure to include environmental aspects. Moreover, UNEP believes that if water, forests, land, drugs, and extractives are not managed properly, this will jeopardize the country's economic recovery and its already fragile security situation. This paper looks at five major natural resources that could either help to build peace or trigger conflict in Afghanistan.

Land

Afghanistan is located in Central Asia and covers an area of 650,000 square kilometers. 12% of the land is arable (6% irrigated and 6% un-irrigated). An additional 46% is under permanent pasture and some 2.1% is under forest cover (UNEP, 2009). Between 70 and 85 % of the population are involved in agriculture-related activities. The last three decades of war and the current period of insecurity have disturbed land rights. Insecurity over land rights has impeded major investment in development. The mixture of formal and traditional institutions often leads to disputes over land between internally displaced people, refugees and settlers, or between farmers and nomadic groups for ethnic, geographical or political reasons or due to the overlapping of land titles. For instance, the most complicated and longest land dispute in Afghanistan is between the Hazara and Nomads (Kuchis). The dispute began in 1894 when the British granted the pastures of

Hazarajat, which had traditionally been used by the Shia Hazaras, to the Sunni Kochis. This issue has been at the heart of conflictual inter-ethnic relations for over a century, with different administrations favoring one side or the other, and the situation has frequently flared up into violence. In 2009 there were reports of Hazara communities constructing trenches

at strategic entry points to the central highlands amid rumors of Taliban arms being provided to Kochis and Iranian support for the Hazara. Furthermore, land-grabbing or illegal encroachment by warlords and elites add to frustration and increase the potential for conflict. Similarly, government corruption, mismanaged land reforms, and the lack of transparency, justice and law enforcement have all influenced the situation regarding property rights.

Landholding issues are the collective responsibility of various government institutions. No single institution exists to deal directly with property rights. According to the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU),

Recent studies of natural resources suggest there is potential for economic growth which would make it possible to overcome challenges in relation to development and insecurity

Land rights in Afghanistan are governed by more than one legal regime, including customary law, civil law, Islamic law and state law" (2003). There is uncertainty and overlapping between these different regimes. On the one hand, this ambiguity in legal rights, which often fuels conflicts between different communities or ethnic groups, has raised the question about the conditions under which people have the right to own common or private land. On the other hand, the weak management of land, water, minerals, forests and drugs has led to insurgents taking up arms, causing instability and insecurity throughout the country. According to Oxfam (2008), disputes over water and land are the two most common reasons for violent conflict, accounting for fifty-five percent of all cases. Ultimately, the success of the various formal and traditional land management structures will depend on how well they can address three challenges:

- Managing the growing demand for land: Rapid population growth, returning refugees, and environmental degradation are constraining the amount of productive land available and increasing competition over land in rural areas for agriculture and in urban centers for building.
- Stopping land grabbing: Weak and inconsistent land management, endemic corruption, and insecurity have permitted opportunistic land grabs by powerful elites, which undermine the rule of law, and breed resentment among local people.
- Putting in place structures to resolve land disputes: more effective mechanisms need to be developed to resolve land disputes, which inhibit development and poison community relations.

Water

After land, disputes over the allocation of water are the most contentious issue in Afghanistan. Likewise, decades of war, underinvestment, and inadequate management have tarnished Afghanistan's irrigation network. Afghanistan has the lowest storage capacity in the region and one of the lowest storage rates in the world. It is estimated that by 2025 water availability will drop to one-third of 2008 levels, and to one-half by 2050. This would push the average per capita water allocation in Afghanistan well under the threshold for water stress. Some parts of Afghanistan, such as the Northern river basin, would fall below the absolute threshold for water scarcity, with potentially serious implications for food security. Similarly, the situation concerning potable water in fast-growing urban areas is getting worse. For instance, demand for water in Kabul began to exceed supply in 2012 and projections indicate that, by 2050, the capital city may require six times as much water as it does now.

As a landlocked country of plains and mountains, Afghanistan's water supply is restricted to rivers and streams.

The five major rivers of Afghanistan are: the Helmand, the Harirod, the Kunar, the Panjsher and the Oxus (Darya Amu). These major rivers flow into neighboring Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, providing them with precious water. However, with limited freshwater in the region, water is an issue of tremendous regional sensitivity. These countries fear that improvements to Afghan's water infrastructure will significantly reduce the flow of water. For example, since the government of Afghanistan has embarked on the construction of Salam Dam, located on the Harirod River, the Iranian government has been trying to sabotage its construction by supporting insurgent groups as it is worried that a reduced flow from the Harirod River would affect the irrigated land in Iran. Similarly, Pakistan fears that the construction of dams on Kunar River would irrevocably damage its growing economy and the livelihoods of its people. Since 1872, the Helmand River has been the source of intermittent disputes between Afghanistan and Iran. Meanwhile, Amu Darya travels through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to the Aral Sea and has itself proved to be a significant source of tension between these countries. In short, water can divide countries and communities, but can also bind them together.



Village with access to water



Village with no access to water

Forests

There are three types of forest in Afghanistan: mixed oak and conifer forests to the east of the country, an open woodland belt across the centre and north, and irrigated agro-forests in valleys throughout the country where water is available. In the late 1970s, based on incomplete evidence, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) concluded that in the nineteenth century there had been as much as one million hectares of oak forest, and two million hectares of coniferous forest (pines and cedar) that together would have covered 4.5 percent of the country's total land area. "Various types of open woodland, with pistachio, juniper and other species covered about 32 million hectares or 48 percent of the land area" (Saba, 2003).

The illegal timber trade, though primarily focused in a few eastern provinces, plays an important role in on-going instability in these areas: creating a shadow economy, which reaches across the border into Pakistan, and providing incentives for powerful groups profiting from the

trade to perpetuate the instability and undermine Peace-building initiatives. If policies are not aligned properly to stop the degradation of the environment, the poor will keep overusing resources for their own survival.

Drugs

The drugs economy in Afghanistan falls into the spectrum of NRM because poppies and hashish are conflict goods, illicit commodities, and a means of survival for many people. Drug production in Afghanistan has built a powerful shadow narco-economy that provides huge revenues for traffickers and some insurgents, and has contributed to pervasive corruption throughout many levels of government. The drugs trade has become one of the main pillars of the Afghan economy, accounting for an estimated 16 percent of GDP, and involving an estimated five percent of the population. But as insecurity and the drugs trade are mutually reinforcing, it is a pervasive and potent challenge to the country's stability. The Afghan drug trade is a contributing factor to the insurgency, generating revenues in the hundreds of millions of dollars. This money serves two important functions: it pays the operational expenses of insurgents and creates incentives for poor governance. Insecurity enables farmers not only to cultivate poppies with less fear of eradication, but also creates an environment in which opium production becomes the only livelihood option. According to UNODC (2009), in 2008, the Taliban earned \$ 155 million from the drug trade, the traffickers \$ 2.2 billion, and Afghan farmers \$ 440 million. UNODC estimates that in 2011, 95 percent of total poppy cultivation took place in nine provinces in the Southern and Western regions, including some of the districts where the insurgency is strongest and the reach of the government is weakest.

The narcotics trade encourages and facilitates the exploitation and extraction of other natural resource products, such as timber, gemstones, and high-value wildlife products. Criminal networks with established smuggling routes can switch between different types of resources depending on supplies and the dictates of the market. In areas controlled by the insurgency, poppy production, natural resource exploitation, and smuggling all increase, setting in motion a mutually reinforcing situation of increased illegal resource trade. In addition, because agricultural and economic services to farmers are fragile, poppy cultivation for the drugs business is accepted as a means of survival.

Extractives

The United States Geological Survey (USGS), in collaboration with the British Geological Survey (BGS) and the Afghanistan Geological Survey (AGS) has assessed Afghanistan's oil, gas, mineral, coal and water resources, as well as seismic hazards and geospatial infrastructure develop-

ment. This updates a pre-war geological and mineral resources map and report which had been produced by several hundred Soviet geologists during the Cold war. In 2006, USGS identified undiscovered oil reserves 18 times the amount originally thought to be possible and three times the natural gas prospects (Shroder, 2007). Following this assessment, the Afghan mining sector received a great deal of attention both at national and international levels. The country's main underground resources are gemstones, uranium, common metals, rare-earth metals and precious metals such as gold and silver. However, experience from around the world has shown that the extractives sector can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can generate jobs and revenue and fund infrastructure, but on the other hand, the presence of rich mineral resources can be a 'curse' that encourages corruption and bad governance, stunts economic growth, and causes new environmental, political and social problems.

Developing the country's mineral resources is a strategic priority for the government and the international community, who see the sector as an engine for growth and the best hope for Afghanistan becoming fiscally self-sufficient in the medium term. However, there are huge challenges for such capital-intensive investments. For instance, the transportation network has not yet been fully developed. The World Bank estimates that a "major mine developed in the country will have some of the longest lead times, capital requirements, and highest operating costs of any global investment". Nevertheless, several large new concessions have been tendered, and oil and gas wells are being developed.

Furthermore, there is a history of revenue from mining in Afghanistan funding local warlords and insurgent groups. For instance, the former leader of the Northern Alliance, Ahmad Shah Massoud, reportedly funded his anti-Soviet campaign in the Panjshir province in the 1980s by imposing a tax on the mining of emeralds and lapis lazuli. Similarly, a 2012 report by the US Defense Department argued that criminal gangs were smuggling chromites across the border to Pakistan, paying protection money to the Haqqani network and the Pakistani Taliban. Recently, the identification of new natural resources such as Miss Aynak copper mine, the Hajigak iron deposit, and the northern Amu Darya oil and gas fields, has attracted high-profile investments by both public and private companies from India and China. The government of Afghanistan sees the mining sector as a potential engine for economic growth and a strategic priority. It has set out its vision for the mineral sector in two key documents- the "Oil, Gas and Mining Sector Vision" and the "National Extractive Industries Excellence Programme". According to the Ministry of Mines, mineral extraction will provide between 42 and 45 percent of Afghanistan's GSP by 2024, will create jobs, and reduce reliance on international aid and help to diversify and strengthen the Afghan economy.

However, the Afghan government cannot implement this approach effectively until there is strong support and cooperation from the local and regional parties. Moreover, the current extractive industrial system is not fully sustainable. It requires a holistic approach, not only in terms of developing environmental safeguards, but also in terms of integrating a conflict-sensitive approach and peace-inducing factors in all policy-making and planning processes.

Conclusion

In Afghanistan the recognition of conflict sensitive approaches or Strategic Environmental Assessments as an integral part of a policy, planning and programming (PPP) development process is a major challenge because it needs a thorough understanding of each policy and whether its implementation would have harmful effects, as well as understanding of the characteristics of each alternative and proposed ways to mitigate potential impacts. Therefore, the GoA and international partners have to mainstream natural resources, particularly their potential contribution to reducing poverty and enhancing stability, from the beginning of the national planning process. In the UNEP report specific recommendations are given for each resource.

Incorporating conflict-sensitive approaches or strategic environmental assessments into a policy, planning and programming (PPP) development process is complex and challenging. The United Nations Environment Programme – through its policy and advocacy work on the ground – is encouraging the GoA and international partners to mainstream natural resource considerations and sound environmental management practices into national planning processes, with a view to slashing poverty and boosting stability. In a recent United Nations Country Team report on natural resource management and peace building, the international community is actively encour-

aged to support transparent and effective natural resource management in the following ways:

- I. Setting a good example by making sure environmental impact assessments and conflict-sensitive approaches are standard requirements for appropriate development interventions.
- II. Providing capacity-building support to implement best practices in NRM structures, processes and laws; and facilitating and encouraging public participation in decision-making, long-term planning and implementation.
- III. Encouraging better data collection and providing warnings when risks are detected. This can help identify existing and potential disputes over natural resources and integrate natural resource risks into conflict early-warning systems as well as long-term development planning.
- IV. Supporting third-party mediation in natural resource dispute resolution both regionally and nationally.
- V. Attracting international attention and catalyzing funding to forestall emerging resource conflicts.

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Oil Refinery

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Natural resource management – a central pillar of crisis-affected people's resilience

Blanche Renaudin & Bonaventure Sokpoh

There is a close link between a preserved ecosystem, its resilience and that of the people who depend on it. It is urgent to make natural resource management a central part of resilience strategies, by focusing more on existing strategies based on endogenous knowledge and innovation. This needs to be accompanied by strong commitment from governments, donors, actors and communities to reverse the process of environmental degradation and reinforce people's resilience.

For a number of decades, there has been global concern about natural resource management and the protection of the environment. This is the consequence of over-exploitation of natural resources and uncontrolled urbanization as well as pollution from industry and agriculture (chemical, greenhouse gases). Aid actors are not exempt from these concerns as these phenomena have direct consequences on certain operational contexts and affect the people who live there. In addition, the fact that aid organizations often have to return to the same contexts to provide assistance raises questions about their ability to reinforce the autonomy of authorities and communities in the face of such situations. These issues are causing a change in paradigm and are placing resilience at the centre of many key actors' strategies¹ and at the interface between several types of operation, between emergency relief and development.

Resilience is defined as "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb,

accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions"². Preservation of the environment and resilience building are two concepts which make it possible to respond to the question of disaster risk while preserving the existing potential of the context in question and strengthening the capacity of the affected populations in the medium and long term. The interactions between these two concepts are all the more important as the people who are the most concerned by international aid are also the most weakened by a degraded environment. Wherein the importance of raising awareness among aid actors so that they take the environment into account more in programmes which aim to build resilience.

Degradation of the natural environment: causes and consequences for livelihoods

In several regions of the world (e.g. the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the foothills of the Andes, the fringes of the Andes and island areas) environmental degradation is taking place in the form of desertification, deforestation, reduced soil fertility, degradation of pastureland, reduced biodiversity, reduced availability of water, etc. The causes are both climatic (increase in frequency and scale of natural hazards) and man-made (major demographic growth and poor management of natural resources).

The degradation of the natural environment causes the deterioration of ecosystems and ecosystem services on which people depend to meet their basic needs (food,

water, medicine, fuel, shelter and revenue). Poor people in rural areas are particularly affected as the resources provided by their environment are often their only means of subsistence. Communities change their coping strategies in order to adapt to this deterioration. Though certain strategies contribute to re-establishing the balance between human activities and environmental preservation (e.g. transhumance, migration, etc.), others consist of short-term solutions which increase long-term degradation (reducing fallow periods, cultivating fragile areas like hillsides with inappropriate techniques, abusive tree felling, etc.). “Harmful” coping strategies therefore create a spiral which makes communities both actors and victims of the degradation of their natural environment.

In addition, certain changes in recent years, notably in terms of food production, have had harmful effects on the environment, reducing long-term production capacity. The intensification of agriculture, for example, characterized by the introduction of improved seeds, GMOs, very erosive tilling practices, non-organic fertilizers and intensive irrigation (particularly in south Asia) has allowed productivity to increase, but has contributed to resource depletion and degraded the structure and fertility of soils, robbing future generations of their productive heritage.

Desertification in the Sahel

The degradation of the environment has disrupted the mechanisms which communities had used for a long time, whether nomadic or sedentary, to protect themselves as much as possible against climatic hazards (migration during the dry season, transhumance, etc.). Transhumance routes have been disturbed, forcing livestock farmers to explore new pastureland further south, which leads to a greater number of conflicts with crop farmers. Conflicts have also arisen between herders due to the degradation of fodder resources and the drying up of certain wells. Solidarity mechanisms are sometimes disturbed due to conflicts over these resources. Each year, several million people are threatened in the Sahel.

The brown revolution is underway in Ethiopia

Ecological intensification has replaced the green revolution with the brown revolution, doubling yields in four years and restoring the soil. Using agroforestry based on *Sesbania* and local herbaceous plants, composting and cover crops in watersheds, the Tigray project has doubled yields of barley, wheat, maize and “teff”. The production of “faba” beans has risen from 250 to 2500 kg/ha. The water table is rising in the area, springs are re-appearing and vegetation resists twice as long to dry periods. Studies by the Rodal Institute show that organic matter in the soil retains up to 30 times its weight in water. Based on this work, ecological intensification makes it possible to go from 160 to 480 m³ of water or more per hectare. With the support of the government, the extension of land used for agro-ecological practices is estimated to grow to 40 million hectares of cultivated land by 2015³.

Programmes which aim to build resilience therefore need to give a central place to the rehabilitation and preservation of natural resources. Agricultural methods of production should preserve natural potential in a sustainable and energy efficient manner. Techniques such as agro-forestry, permaculture, agro-ecology, etc. aim to create ecosystems which produce food and other useful resources (firewood, shade, etc.). In addition, specific techniques for degraded soils in areas with an arid or semi-arid climate have been developed and tested and have given convincing results in terms of the rehabilitation of soil fertility and increased agricultural production. This is the case for Zaïs⁴, half moons and stone bunds⁵, for example, which are easily reproduced but require more time to prepare the soil and agricultural equipment which the poorest farmers sometimes do not have (hoe, cart, wheelbarrow, etc.). These techniques deserve to be more widely disseminated. There should be investment in training for farmers (building human capital) and they should be provided with support to apply these techniques. Other techniques more specifically for natural resource management are also used. The results have been encouraging (e.g. FMNR⁶, community management of natural resources like forests, timberless construction techniques to reduce deforestation, etc.).

Lastly, support for innovation is needed to help new solutions to emerge adapted to areas where there is a danger of environmental degradation. Research into innovative solutions should combine scientific knowledge and the endogenous knowledge of communities. In order to guarantee ownership on the part of local communities, their knowledge of the natural environment, the changes taking place and the risks they face needs to be improved and they should be involved in the search for solutions.

Environmental degradation and vulnerability to natural disasters

In addition to supply services such as water, food and firewood, and cultural services such as religion and leisure pursuits, ecosystems⁷ can also provide different regulation services with regard to natural disasters. As underlined by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, “the risk of disasters is fundamentally linked to environmental problems”⁸. The preservation of the environment therefore helps to build the resilience of communities to disasters, by reducing the risk that they will take place as well as their impact in terms of human lives, health, goods and services, and livelihoods.

Well-managed ecosystems can considerably reduce the impact of numerous natural risks such as flooding, avalanches and landslides. The capacity for an ecosystem to play this natural regulator role depends on the intensity of the natural hazard and the health of the ecosystem. This implies having an ecosystem that is well-preserved and

functional, and resource use and demand for eco-system services which do not exceed the capacity of production, with a view to sustainable regulation over time. Degraded ecosystems can still reduce the impact of such events, but much less so than functional ecosystems⁹.

In addition, the state of an ecosystem can also influence the frequency and intensity of natural risks, if it is sufficiently preserved, by playing the role of a natural barrier. For example, the existence of well-developed mangroves in coastal areas reduces the cyclone surge effect and the entry of tsunami waves onto land. The reduction of mangroves to develop the production of prawns results in the weakening of marine ecosystems (fish multiplication zones), but also their capacity to act as a buffer. More generally, ecosystems like wetlands, forests and coral reefs are all susceptible to absorb all or part of a shock by acting as a “buffer”.



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Mangroves at low tide on the Sumatra coast near Banda Aceh

Natural hazards lead to the degradation of the environment through the loss of specific habitats, the mortality of endemic species, the destruction of natural elements (wood, reefs, etc.) by acting as a barrier. Ecosystems will be all the more resilient to such events if they are preserved, diversified and functional. What is more, the damage created by such climatic events (chemical pollution from cracks in industrial buildings caused by an earthquake, detritus of all kinds, bodies) reduces the resilience of a given environment.

A preserved ecosystem helps to reduce the vulnerability of communities¹⁰ to natural risks, particularly if their livelihoods depend on the environment. If a storm or a cyclone takes place and affects local buildings in a context where building materials (wood, sand) are already locally depleted, reconstruction will require much more time and money, and will even require external assistance. Being actively engaged in the preservation of the natural environment creates the necessary conditions for vulnerable groups to become engaged in sustainable development, and increases their dignity and their respect by giving

them the means to identify risks and limit them, rather than simply waiting for a disaster to strike.

Investing in the management of healthy and sustainable ecosystems brings solutions at a lower cost and allows the vulnerability of communities to be reduced in relation to crises. According to the World Bank, investment in preventive measures, such as the preservation of healthy ecosystems, makes it possible to save seven times what is spent on the response to an emergency when an ecosystem has not been preserved. According to UNEP, natural disasters hinder development objectives, and few governments, donors and aid and development organizations adopt an approach that is sufficiently cautious during the design and management of their projects, and even fewer recognize the importance of good ecosystem management to reduce the risk of disaster (UNEP, 2007).

Preservation of the natural environment in Honduras

In the isolated villages in the rolling landscape of south west Honduras, farmers use an ancestral technique to protect their fields. For a number of years, thousands of them have returned to and re-adapted these traditional agroforestry techniques which are very beneficial in improving livelihoods and reducing the impact of natural disasters. Thus, for example, though hurricane Mitch struck the area fully in 1998, there was little destruction, whereas there was significant damage in the surrounding areas.

This technique adapted to a sub-humid tropical context is called the Quesungual Slash and Mulch Agroforestry System (QSMAS)¹¹. It is a cultivation method which aims to increase agricultural production at the same time as preserving and making use of natural resources. This consists of cultivating crops under the cover of an endemic forest whose large and deep roots stabilise the soil. Foliage is pruned to reduce competition for light with the crops, enrich the soil's nutrients and maintain high water retention capacity. The crops are planted without tillage and without slash and burn. This ensures that there is a permanent cover of vegetation, limits the formation of a slaking crust and reduces evaporation from the soil. Based on a holistic, participatory and collaborative approach which makes use of knowledge based on traditional community know-how, such a project not only makes it possible to reduce disaster risk, but has also led to an integrated development strategy which brings many benefits both at the level of smallholding and at the level of landscape management.

During the initial analysis and the design of disaster risk reduction and resilience building programmes, it is therefore essential to take environmental considerations into account at the different stages of the project cycle. Understanding the underlying causes of risks, particularly those linked to the state and management of the natural environment, should allow long-term action to be taken in

response. The analysis of vulnerabilities should include the extent of environmental degradation in the area, possible loss of environmental resilience caused by the hazard and the level of exposure to dangerous pollution. It is also important to study the opportunities which exist at the different levels of governance in the area to know what physical, institutional, social and economic means need to be put in place. A variety of tools exist to do this, such as the CEDRA¹² method developed by Tearfund.

Lastly, risk mitigation activities based on managing the natural environment can also be put in place. *See table 1 presenting activities which can be carried out at the end of the article.*



© Groupe URD

Environmental impact of disasters
Banda Aceh

Loss of biodiversity and reduced resilience

Resilience is directly linked to the biodiversity of an environment which represents the variety and variability of nature and which includes the three basic levels of organisation of living systems: the genetic level, that of species and that of ecosystems¹³. Monoculture and the introduction of GMOs are a threat to this diversity and lead to environmental simplification, increased risks for production and genetic erosion.

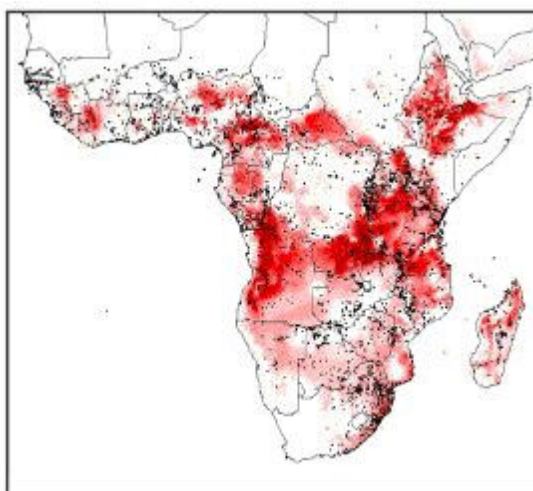
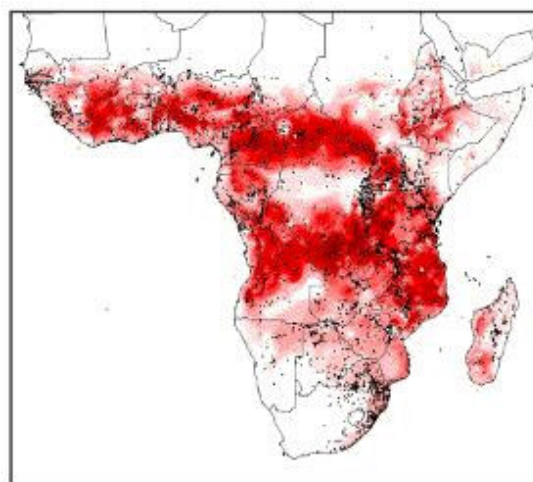
Diversity is a factor of productivity and includes a high capacity to evolve. Resilience is also linked to the capacity of living organisms to adapt to an environment which may or may not be changing, the ability to resist attacks and the general level of stability. All these capacities are encouraged by a diversified environment, which makes it possible to evolve into a new structure if necessary. History has repeatedly shown that the uniformity that characterizes agricultural areas which have less seed variety is a source of increased risk for farmers because genetically homogeneous fields are more vulnerable to illness, to being attacked by harmful insects and to climate change.

Lastly, climate change is a major threat to biodiversity, as shown by the Millenium Ecosystem Assessment¹⁴ (2005). Good management of local biodiversity can preserve the health of ecosystems such as forests and soils, which are

both major carbon sinks. It can also reduce the need for nitrogen fertilizers on farm land, which are a major source of greenhouse gases, and which are not always available or accessible. It is important, therefore, to cultivate biodiversity to combat climate change and its effects. Local biodiversity and varieties stored in gene banks remain under-used in terms of climate change adaptation¹⁵.

Restoring biodiversity to reduce the impact of climate change

It is predicted that by 2055 climate change will cause a dramatic decline in the major genetic resource of wild *Vigna* (related to niébé, a basic African crop and important source of protein) with regard to its current distribution and its genetic diversity (map 1)¹⁶.



Source :

Jarvis, A., et al., The effects of climate change on crop wild relatives, Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment, Elsevier B.V. (2008)

It would be useful to reinforce inventories of the biodiversity of the type of products concerned (food, firewood...) which exist in the wild or are cultivated, and to encourage use of existing global genetic exchange mechanisms. On another scale, advocacy is needed vis-à-vis governments in favour of giving communities access to the biodiversity that they need. More globally, informing rural communities and their local institutions about how to make use of biodiversity (preserving, reinforcing), and the benefits that it brings in terms of economics, risk reduction and climate change adaptation, is essential in order to build their resilience.

Conclusion

Despite the importance of a preserved environment for community resilience, the mobilisation of international aid organisations and particularly the countries concerned is still too hesitant. Yet, the importance of preserving the natural environment has been recognized for many years in key institutional frameworks. For example, principle 8 of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief (1994) stipulates that "Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs", adding that "We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes". The Sphere project now includes the environment as a cross-cutting theme, and states, "It provides the natural resources that sustain individuals and contributes to quality of life. It needs protection and management if essential functions are to be maintained. The minimum standards address the need to prevent over-exploitation, pollution and degradation of environmental conditions". Lastly, the post-2015 MDGs¹⁷ will be called the "Objectives for Sustainable Development" following the proposals made by the United Nations Secretary General at the Rio+20 conference: "We must act now to halt the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation which pose unprecedented threats to humanity"¹⁸.

Natural resource management and environmental protection therefore deserve to be given a central place in operations, not from a "conservationist" angle, but because they contribute to reinforcing the resilience of communities and societies. An environmental impact assessment is crucial when such a strategy is aimed for, because, despite the fact that the challenges are global, appropriate responses need to be contextualised, integrating endogenous knowledge and appropriate coping strategies. Building resilience also depends on political will, coordination, technical know-how, innovation and shared responsibility in terms of risk reduction and crisis management between countries, local authorities, communities, civil society, the private sector and the

international community. The Millenium Ecosystem Assessment (carried out by UNEP) shows that appropriate actions could reverse the degradation of numerous ecosystem functions in the next fifty years, even though this will require major changes in policy and practices.

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¹ European Union, World Bank, USAID, DFID, United Nations agencies and NGOs.

² Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2009, UNISDR.

³ *Agroécologie, une transition vers des modes de vie et de développement viables*; publication of the desertification work group; January 2013; p.91.

⁴ Zaïs are holes for planting which have a diameter of between 20 and 40 cm and a depth of between 10 and 20 cm (the dimensions vary depending on the type of soil). The holes are dug during the dry season from November to May and the number of Zaïs per hectare can vary from 12.000 to 25.000.

⁵ This technique consists of digging a furrow 10 to 15 cm deep and 15 to 20 cm wide, then placing a line of big stones along its contours. This line is strengthened downhill by another line of small stones and earth to consolidate the foundation line of stones.

⁶ Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration.

⁷ Ecosystem: complex and dynamic system including vegetation, animals, micro-organisms and their inorganic environment which interact as a functional unit. <http://www.cbd.int/>

⁸ Living with risk: a global review of disaster reduction initiatives, UNISDR (2004).

⁹ Sudmeier-Rieux, K. and N. Ash 2009. Environmental Guidance Note for Disaster Risk Reduction : Healthy Ecosystems for Human Security. Revised Ed. Gland: IUCN

¹⁰ Disaster Risk Reduction Terminologies, UNISDR, 2009.

¹¹ FAO, Rome, Mr Luis Alvarez Welchez, Agroforestry expert at the FAO Lempira Extension System Project (SEL), Lempira, Honduras. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/participe/2009/05/090515_participe_cam-bio_climatico_quesungual_am.shtml

¹² Climate change and Environmental Degradation Risk and Adaptation assessment (CEDRA) by Tearfund, 2009.

¹³ European Environment Agency (EEA) Glossary - <http://glossary.en.eea.europa.eu/>

¹⁴ The Millenium Ecosystem Assessment is an international work programme set up to respond to the needs of decision makers and the public in terms of scientific information about the consequences of changes to ecosystems in terms of human well-being and the possibility of doing something about these changes. For more information:

<http://www.unep.org/maweb/en/index.aspx>

¹⁵ Climate change and biodiversity for food and agriculture, FAO - <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/013/ai784e.pdf>

¹⁶ Climate change and biodiversity for food and agriculture, FAO - <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/013/ai784e.pdf>

¹⁷ Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.un.org/fr/millenniumgoals/>

¹⁸ A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development, The Report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda; 2013.

Table 1: Examples of risk mitigation activities based on managing the natural environment

Natural risks	Actions to implement
Avalanche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilise slopes with vegetation • Prevent people from entering at-risk areas
Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote drought-resistant varieties • Work on improving the physical and chemical quality of the soil to increase its capacity to retain water • Promote the association of crops • Diversify crops and seed varieties • Encourage preservation/reintroduction of wild plants which can be eaten • Limit working of the soil (e.g. tillage) to limit evaporation and erosion • Avoid slash and burn to maintain vegetation cover and the biological activity of the soil • Encourage cultivation practices which are adapted to arid and semi-arid zones
Floods / Rapid rise in river level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilise slopes with vegetation as a natural barrier and to encourage the infiltration of water into the soil • Establish the limits of natural areas to be preserved and not to be inhabited close to marshes, estuaries and rivers • Position evacuation channels and install rock fill • Stabilise the banks of waterways • Limit settlement on and exploitation (farming, tree felling, etc.) of at-risk areas



Soil preparation using the zaï technique in Burkina Faso

© Groupe URD



Reduction of surface run-off in a field of half-moons in Burkina Faso

Assessment of greenhouse gas emissions in the humanitarian sector: what we have learned from initial experiences

The Humanitarian Environment Network

There is a broad scientific consensus that attributes the rise in global temperatures to the greenhouse gas emissions produced by humans, particularly carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels (transport, the production of electricity, heating) and methane from agriculture and the decomposition of waste. The effects of climate change can already be observed and they are primarily affecting the most fragile populations: increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, reduction of agricultural yields, extension of areas where there is a prevalence of diseases like malaria, dengue fever, etc. Taking into account the current rate of emissions and the lifespan of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, without a major technological or economic change, this phenomenon is going to continue to grow in the decades to come.

In order to remain faithful to their principles (notably, the objective of doing no harm) and to ensure that there is coherence between what they do and their mandate and public positioning, several humanitarian organizations have decided to evaluate their carbon footprint by assessing their greenhouse gas emissions, in order to then put in place measures to reduce them. What does this type of assessment involve and what lessons can be drawn from these first experiences?

An essential precondition: choosing the methodology and the scope of the assessment

The objective of these assessments is to evaluate the volume of greenhouse gas emitted within a given area of activity and to use this to establish an action plan to reduce emissions.

The gases which are taken into account are generally the six greenhouse gases included in the Kyoto Protocol: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide and three fluorinated gases which are essentially of industrial origin. All these gases have different effects and life spans in the atmosphere. As carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas globally, assessments are generally expressed in tons of CO₂ equivalent (TeqCO₂), calculated on the basis of a century. One ton of methane, for example, equals 23 TeqCO₂¹.

The first step in an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions is to define the scope of the assessment. This step

has a major influence on the results. For example, it is possible to only take into account direct emissions from sources belonging to the organisation (fleets of vehicles, generators, etc.) or, at the other extreme, to take into account all direct and indirect emissions, including those that are caused by the production of goods and services and by energy bought. Certain tools impose the scope, such as the *Bilan Carbone*². The scope can also be imposed by law. In France, article 75 of the Grenelle II Law makes it legally binding for corporate bodies which employ more than 500 people to carry out an assessment of their emissions which includes their direct emissions and their indirect emissions linked to energy bought. Smaller private organizations, including the majority of humanitarian organizations, do not have any legal obligations in this area for the time being.

Measure, analyse, reduce... and then start again

Once the methodology has been chosen and the scope has been defined, the next step consists of collecting the data needed for the assessment. This is done by answering the following questions: What data is needed? Does it exist within the organisation? If not, can it be deduced from existing data? What is the margin of error?

This phase is generally the longest and is followed by the calculation and analysis of results. The calculation method is almost always based on the same principle: data about an activity (for example, the number of kilometres covered in long-haul passenger flights) is multiplied by an emission factor (in this example, according to the French Environment and Energy Management Agency, 242 grammes eqCO₂ per kilometer and per passenger) to obtain an evaluation of emissions.

Next is the drawing up of an action plan. The drawing up of the action plan is the genuine goal of the study more than calculating a figure for total emissions. It can include actions to avoid emissions (for example, using electricity produced with renewable energy or reducing travel by adopting video-conferencing), or to reduce emissions (for example, by adopting a policy to reduce electricity consumption or to encourage the use of direct flights and the train), or, as a final resort, to compensate for emissions (for example, by running a project involving the distribution of improved stoves or funding a reforestation campaign).

Feedback

Several organisations within the Humanitarian Environment Network have already carried out assessments of their greenhouse gas emissions. They have chosen a variety of options: Action Contre la Faim, for example, carried out a *Bilan Carbone*, Médecins sans Frontières Suisse calculated its emissions as part of a broader assessment of its environmental impact, while Groupe URD used a methodology developed by *Groupe Energies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarités* (GERES). A number of lessons can be drawn from these experiences:

- First of all, it is important to understand that carrying out and interpreting an assessment requires good understanding of the humanitarian sector and the organisation, notably its flows of accounting and financial data. If external consultants are chosen, it is important to ensure that they have a minimum of knowledge in these fields, so that the study is not too drawn out, the approach can be re-used in subsequent assessments and the results can be put to use.

- Whether or not an external consultant is entrusted with the assessment, it is recommended that someone is chosen within the organisation to be in charge of coordinating activities, communicating to stakeholders about assessment progress and needs, and general awareness-raising within the organisation. During the assessment, this person should mobilize contact persons in the different departments of the organisation in order to collect data. At the end of the assessment, along with other members of the organisation, they should coordinate the prioritization and validation of actions to reduce emissions and how these are monitored over time.

- In order to simplify the assessment, the definition of the scope can target positions where there is genuine room for manoeuvre in the organisation. For example, emergencies for which it would be comparatively very difficult to cut emissions can be excluded. The impossibility of obtaining certain data can also make it necessary to modify the scope during the course of the assessment. In such cases, the final action plan should include a revised measuring and reporting system for the organisation in preparation for the following assessment.

- When an assessment is carried out, this should be promoted to raise awareness among partner organisations. It is essential to plan at least two phases of communication: at the beginning (explaining why an assessment is being carried out, what the objective is and the methodology used) and at the end (thanking the different contributors, presenting the results and launching the action plan).

- The regular updating³ of the assessment should be prepared from the beginning of the data collection: the point of evaluating emissions is to monitor how these change and the impact of efforts to reduce them over a period of several years. Subsequent assessments will be made easier if the experience gained during the initial assessment is carefully managed and shared.

- Finally, interpreting the results can only be done in the light of the scope and the hypotheses established at the beginning of the assessment: figures can vary considerably depending on the methodology. The lack of precision of certain data can also distort the analysis conclusions. As a consequence, it is not easy to compare organizations. It is particularly the change in results over time that is informative as it allows the impact of actions taken to reduce emissions to be measured. However, for this comparison to be relevant in operational contexts which change a great deal, indicators need to be defined which relate the emission figures to a quantity of work (number of staff, budget, number of beneficiaries, number of missions, etc.). Indeed, a drop in activity will necessarily lead to a reduction in emissions, without meaning that the organisation is more virtuous (and vice-versa).

Discussions within the network highlighted the importance of developing a methodology for carrying out assessments which is specific to the humanitarian sector

Discussions within the network highlighted the importance of developing a methodology for carrying out assessments which is specific to the humanitarian sector.

Indeed, existing methods are either inappropriate (data which is difficult to access and is not very reliable, major differences in terms of activities, etc.) or are incomplete (absence of certain emission factors, no exploitable ratios, etc.) which leads each organisation to define its own calculation rules. The assessments carried out in this way require the investment of a great deal of time and competencies.

In conclusion, the network calls for the creation of a sector-based guide to carrying out assessments of greenhouse gas emissions in humanitarian organisations.

This article is based on the minutes of a meeting of the Environnement & Humanitaire network which took place on 24 May 2013.

Text written by the members of the Humanitarian Environment Network

¹ In other terms, the energy that a ton of methane sends back to the earth in 100 years is the same as the energy that 23 tonnes of carbone dioxide sends back.

² The term *Bilan Carbone* is often used generically to describe an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions, but it is actually a trademark owned by the Association Bilan Carbone which can only be used under certain conditions.

³ For example, the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions which is obligatory for organizations with more than 500 staff needs to be updated at least every 3 years.

Due to the complex and urgent nature of humanitarian action, environmental issues are often neglected during the initial response. What mechanisms, policies and tools are available today and what actions need to be taken to integrate environmental issues? How do available tools and guidance get applied practically during a disaster?

Summary

The complexity of humanitarian response and the urgency to provide basic assistance such as food, shelter and water to those affected often results in a lack of consideration for environmental issues. This lack of consideration can lead to severe environmental degradation and depletion of vital natural resources that sustain lives and livelihoods. The increase in number and duration of protracted crises has exacerbated poor natural resource management and environmental damage and made them more apparent.

The effectiveness of humanitarian relief fundamentally depends on the quality and availability of natural resources and yet the humanitarian sector often neglects environmental issues, whether they are driven by anthropogenic action or climate events. Taking the environment into consideration can help protect lives, livelihoods and future generations.

This article explores the extent to which environmental issues are considered in humanitarian action through various mechanisms, policies and mandates. Solutions are recommended to address challenges in reducing potential negative impacts of humanitarian assistance and to better advocate for sustainable recovery. The Bopha Typhoon that struck Mindanao in the Philippines in 2012 is a good example of how environmental issues can be effectively addressed in relief and recovery.

The environment is the sum of all external conditions affecting the life, development and survival of an organism: the physical conditions that affect natural resources (climate, geology, hazards) and the ecosystem services that sustain them (e.g. carbon, nutrient and hydrological cycles)¹. An environmental emergency is defined as a sudden-onset disaster or accident resulting from natural, technological or human-induced factors, or a combination of these, that causes or threatens to cause severe environmental damage as well as harm to human health and/or livelihoods². Some examples of environmental emergencies include earthquakes, floods, industrial accidents, chemical spills and secondary consequences from conflict.

Environment:

The environment is understood as the physical, chemical and biological elements and processes that affect disaster-affected and local populations' lives and livelihoods. It provides the natural resources that sustain individuals and contributes to quality of life. It needs protection and management if essential functions are to be maintained. The minimum standards address the need to prevent over-exploitation, pollution and degradation of environmental conditions and aim to secure the life-supporting functions of the environment, reduce risk and vulnerability and seek to introduce mechanisms that foster adaptability of natural systems for self-recovery.

The Sphere Project -Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response 2011

Context

Insufficient attention to the environment in country-level programming can trigger negative impacts for displaced and local populations and thwart resilience-building efforts. There are well documented examples of crises leading to the adoption of coping strategies that undermine a community's resource base, thereby exacerbating the

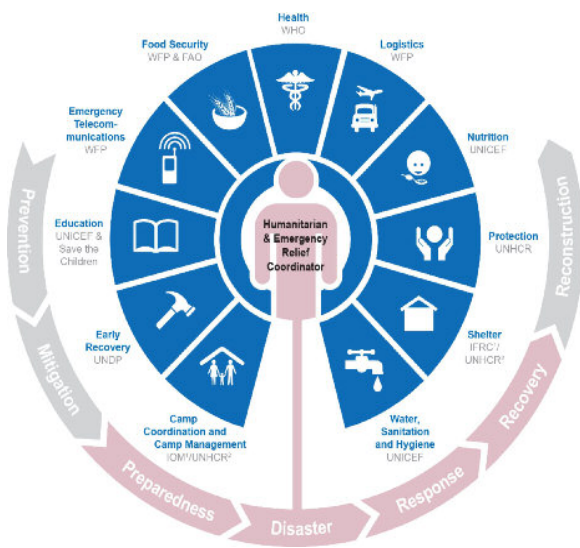
challenge of recovery after the crisis is over. When assessing negative or positive environmental impacts of a project, understanding the specific context is critical. Proactively addressing environmental issues can slow or reverse trends that

lead to deforestation, desertification, soil erosion and pollution, which negatively impacts community resilience, biodiversity, food security and development. These factors may also reduce the vulnerability of the population.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. The IASC was established to serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination relating to humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies³.

As part of the humanitarian reform agenda in 2005, the IASC established the cluster approach. Humanitarian relief is now organised into 11 clusters, with clearly designated lead agencies accountable for delivery in these sectors. These are: Protection; Food Security; Emergency Telecommunications; Early Recovery; Education; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Logistics; Nutrition; Emergency Shelter; Camp Coordination and Camp Management, and Health.

To what extent are environmental issues considered in humanitarian action through various mechanisms, policies and mandates?



Humanitarian Coordination: Cluster Approach

In addition, the IASC established four cross-cutting issues: age, environment, gender and HIV/AIDS. Humanitarian Coordinators and sector leads were mandated to ensure that attention is given to these priority cross-cutting issues and that they are integrated into humanitarian planning and response. By integrating these issues early in a response, gains in humanitarian action can be made more sustainable. As a cross-cutting issue, all humanitarian actors have a shared responsibility to integrate environmental considerations in their operations. Therefore, integrating the environment at all stages of the project cycle should be done systematically using existing tools. This improves the quality and sustainability of humanitarian projects.

A critical component of the programming cycle in many protracted crises is the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). The CAP sets the strategic goals of the humanitarian community, based upon an inter-agency needs assessment, and is an advocacy tool for humanitarian financing, in which projects managed by the United Nations, NGOs and other stakeholders come together to approach the donor community. CAP 2013 guidelines clearly state that Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams are responsible for ensuring a humanitarian strategy is integrated into the CAP. The CAP should include a long-term visionary goal that restores normalcy for all crisis-affected people and addresses available resources, capacities, access and reliance on other actors while integrating cross-cutting issues (e.g. the environment) throughout⁴.

Humanitarian Coordinators at country levels are responsible for ensuring that the environment is a priority cross-cutting issue and integrating it into sectoral needs through assessments, analyses, planning, monitoring and response⁵.

Where we are

The 2010 IASC cluster approach evaluation found that cross-cutting and multi-dimensional issues often are neglected, including environmental issues. Yet it is clearly stated that their implementation can improve the quality of humanitarian assistance. It is therefore important to understand the challenges to implementation and to develop strategies to address these challenges.

While the evaluation pointed to limited progress in integrating the environment into humanitarian response, there are some excellent initiatives taken by the clusters and agencies in specific countries. The shelter cluster, for instance, has established an environment reference group at the global level and has deployed environmental advisers to the field. UNHCR has Environmental Guidelines related to refugee and returnee assistance. In 2008, the IASC endorsed guidance developed by the Task Force on Safe Access to Firewood and Alternative Energy in Humanitarian Settings.

More than 413 agencies worldwide have formally agreed to consider environmental concerns or issues throughout the planning and follow through of relief programmes⁶. Principle 8 in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief specifies that relief aid must pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. Protection Principle 1 of the SPHERE handbook states that those involved in humanitarian response must take steps to avoid or minimise any adverse effects of their intervention, re-emphasising the principle of doing no harm through environmental impact assessment. Project managers should assess potential positive and negative impacts before project implementation, and respectively enhance and mitigate those risks.

Advocating for the Environment

The environment has been receiving more attention in recent years; however stronger commitment and accountability will be required to fully integrate the environment into humanitarian action. More efficient integration of cross-cutting issues should be managed in assessments, policies, tools, training, guidance, strategic planning and operations. The implementation of cross-cutting issues could also be improved upon through information sharing of successes and lessons learned between clusters⁷. Thus, project selection should be contingent on consideration of the environmental impact and should prioritise projects that propose mitigation measures.

Relief work should be linked to a longer term approach as this would ensure sustainability of initiatives to integrate environmental considerations and reduce the overall costs

of disasters as negative effects are more likely to be reduced⁸. In this respect, identification of environmental risks should bridge humanitarian planning (including in the CAP) and development programming (UNDAF).

The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) works to ensure that environmental issues are an integral part of all elements of the humanitarian response. The JEU works with global cluster coordinators to integrate the environment into humanitarian action in global cluster guidance and at country levels to develop specific action plans in priority countries.

As an attempt to bring together the disparate networks and experts working on this issue, the JEU has helped form an environmental network. This network, coordinated by the JEU, seeks to promote environmentally-sustainable humanitarian programming. Key partners agree to work together on joint advocacy, promotion of standards and guidance, and development of policy and practice. Partners in the network seek to work coherently on the most critical issues in selected country contexts, to identify and agree upon critical elements in the humanitarian response, jointly develop country-specific action plans and organise joint training. The focus is on large-scale emergencies where the environment is a critical factor in vulnerability and conflict.

Actions must be taken at all stages of the humanitarian programming cycle

Environment Marker:

UNEP launched an environmental marker to screen projects submitted under the 2011 Humanitarian Workplan in Sudan (similar to the CAP) for their environmental impact. A clear need for this exercise was recognized given the links between resilience, sustainable livelihoods, conflict and sustainable management of natural resources. Following the successful use of the environmental marker in the 2011 and 2012 Sudan Workplan, it was piloted in South Sudan and Afghanistan for the 2013 CAP.

In 2013 UNEP prepared detailed environmental guidance notes, including country and cluster specific guidance for humanitarian actors in each country. These were disseminated to humanitarian actors in the three countries. Presentations were given to the clusters on how to use the environmental marker and mitigate environmental impacts in humanitarian action. In addition, projects in Sudan and South Sudan were screened against the environmental marker, while projects submitted under the Afghanistan CHAP will be screened as they are received through 2013.

Proposed Action and Initiatives

To increase the likelihood that that underlying environmental causes of crises are considered and that environmental risks are reduced during humanitarian response, actions must be taken at all stages of the humanitarian programming cycle.

The JEU and partners have reviewed existing guidance and planning tools (such as the multi-cluster initial rapid assessment (MIRA), CAP and other IASC cluster specific planning tools and proposed environmental provisions where relevant. This is imperative particularly in the countries or regions where livelihoods are vulnerable to floods, drought, or conflict over natural resources. Many recent CAPs indeed emphasize underlying environmental factors, such as water scarcity, disputes over land, deforestation or impact from climate change, as contributing to crises and having the potential to derail implementation of the humanitarian strategy. At the same time however, few go so far as to try to address these issues through programming.

Case study: BOPHA/PABLO Typhoon, Mindinao, Philippines



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On 4 December 2012, the Bopha typhoon struck in Mindanao, a southern Philippine island, taking over 1,140 lives and affecting 12,570 families⁹.

The typhoon destroyed infrastructure, homes and agricultural land and deforested large areas. Severe flooding persisted following the typhoon, adding to the distress of the affected communities. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Davao was supported with an environmental expert, deployed through the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) and supported by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). The environmental expert helped the HCT and clusters to ensure the environment was considered in strategic and response planning, including needs assessments and prioritizing projects¹⁰.

Local communities and humanitarian actors were, and continue to be, overwhelmed by environmental factors following the typhoon, including debris, household and hazardous waste, haphazard settlements, energy supply, and deforestation.

Environmental assessments provided information about the situation in Mindanao. For example, assessment results found that potential environmental damage from debris could come from local business and household chemicals and high concentrations of nutrients leeching into soils from biodegradable components. As requested by the local government, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau mapped out landslide-prone areas; their efforts are on-going. This information helped to provide resettlement site information for families that needed to rebuild shelters in safer areas¹¹.

As coconut is one of the major agricultural cash crops, the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) worked, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on the logging of fallen coconut trees in order to prevent the spreading of disease, infestations of moths and beetles and to maintain the sustainability of the coconut tree industry. This debris was also recycled for lumber and temporary shelter construction. According to PCA, UNDP assisted cash for work programmes for those who were cutting and removing tree debris¹². The PCA also concurrently worked on seed projects, providing seeds to areas throughout the country. Other actors have participated in national greening projects, such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who planted seeds and discussed plans to increase crop biodiversity and moving away from monoculture farming techniques.

Other agencies and clusters also implemented environmental measures. Agencies assessed energy use for families living in tents and bunkhouses to reduce potential fires. The Education Cluster recycled debris materials for school furniture.

The Bopha Typhoon response in the Philippines in December 2012 - January 2013 is a good example because an environmental expert was deployed to support the country team to ensure that the environment was integrated into the humanitarian programme cycle. The expert participated in needs assessments and provided recommendations to inform humanitarian response plans. The Environmental Expert concluded that environmental issues may be better prioritised in the CAP if each project proposal has an environmental marker¹³ as an evaluation tool when environmental experts are not present.

One of the key factors to overcoming challenges for integrating the environment into humanitarian action is government support. The Bopha Typhoon response was done collaboratively and is a good example of government support. The government expressed interest in integrating the environment to build back safer. This example shows how it would be beneficial to deploy an environmental expert as part of the initial UNDAC team to provide an overall assessment on how environmental issues further impact human health, livelihoods and security.

Conclusion

To conclude, certain recommendations should be highlighted:

- Incorporating environmental issues into the project cycle improves programme quality as it makes projects more relevant, more efficient, and more effective.
- Integrating the environment into all aspects of the humanitarian programme cycle from the very beginning has the potential to reduce the vulnerabilities and challenges of affected populations as a consequence of natural resource degradation.
- Integrating the environment throughout the project cycle should be done systematically using existing tools to improve the quality of projects and make them more relevant, effective and sustainable.
- An Environment expert should be deployed as part of the initial UNDAC team to provide an overall assessment on how environmental issues could further impact human health, livelihoods and security.
- Project selection should be contingent on consideration of environmental impact and should prioritise projects that propose mitigation measures.
- Environmental risk identification should be used as a mechanism to bridge humanitarian planning (including in CAP) and development programming (UNDAF).

Ashley Lynn Bevenssee & Kumari Rita Dhakal
Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit

¹ UNEP, From conflict to peacebuilding: the role of natural resources and the environment, 2009.

² UNEP Governing Council, 13 November 2002.

³ General Assembly Resolution 46/182, June 1992. IASC works under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

⁴ Reference Guide for developing the 2013 Consolidated Appeals, 2013. Cross-cutting issues are those that should be integrated into humanitarian response within all clusters.

⁵ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC): Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response, 24 November 2006.

⁶ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief: Code of Conduct, Principle 8.

⁷ Cluster Approach Evaluation 2: Synthesis Report, Groupe URD, April 2010. These conclusions are based upon the case study countries that were evaluated for this assessment: Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, the occupied Palestinian territory and Uganda.

⁸ Mainstreaming the Environment into Humanitarian Response: An Exploration of Opportunities and Issues, Barrett, Murfitt and Venton, Environmental Resources Management Limited, November 2007.

⁹ The Republic of the Philippines, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council: NDRRMC Update: Progress Report re Flooding in Maguindanao, 13 June 2013.

¹⁰ The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit: Environmental issues related to Bopha/Pablo typhoon: Eastern Mindanao, Philippines, 12 February 2013.

¹¹ The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit: Environmental issues related to Bopha/Pablo typhoon: Eastern Mindanao, Philippines, 12 February 2013.

¹² OCHA Mission Report

¹³ Environmental markers are used to identify each humanitarian project's potential impact on the environment, following international guidelines from a positive environmental impact to major negative environmental impact by designating a rating: Environmental marker A, B, C or D. These markers help humanitarian actors address the environment as a cross-cutting issue.

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- Website of the Department of Agriculture, Philippine Coconut Authority: UNDP Adopts PCA's Chainsaw Massacres: <http://www.pca.da.gov.ph/pr050913a.php>
- Website of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit: Environmental Emergencies Centre: www.eecentre.org

For the majority of humanitarians, the idea of systematically taking into account the environmental impacts of their programmes and of running their organisations is new, and they are unsure about how to proceed and even about the legitimacy of such an approach.

Action contre la Faim began to adopt an environmental approach in 2009. This article outlines the main lessons learned and is aimed at other organisations who would like to take the leap themselves.

Growing awareness and the implementation of the approach

How does this approach come together? Broadly speaking, there are three main stages: growing awareness accompanied by an initial assessment; a phase of projects destined to correct the main problems; and the final stage of transition to a process of continuous improvement.

The starting point for an environmental approach is growing awareness in the organisation, often due to an external factor: an incident, a regulation, pressure from a stakeholder, lack of coherence with what is communicated or advocated or simply a major gap in relation to other comparable organisations...

In order to avoid running out of steam too quickly, this increased awareness should be formalized, for example in the form of a charter or commitments, endorsed by management and widely communicated to partners. Indeed, it is not important if these declarations are subsequently questioned, the more the initial ideas are shared and debated, the greater the chances that the process will be successful. In particular, it is essential to understand the links between the organisation's mandate and values and the need to manage its environmental impact.

This increased awareness should be accompanied or immediately followed by an assessment of the organisation's performance. This assessment performs two essential roles:

- Firstly, it helps to understand which of the organisation's activities contribute most to its impact on the environment and thus to ensure that the approach genuinely responds to needs. At ACF, and in other organizations who do this work, the results have shown that the environmental impact of programmes is negligible compared to that of their preparation phases and the support ser-

vices required to implement them. Without an initial assessment it may have been assumed that the opposite was true.

- Secondly, the initial assessment provides a reference point against which to measure progress, and consequently the return on investment.

The choice of the method used for the initial assessment should not be taken lightly. It is preferable to choose an existing methodology rather than a homemade one, as there is a risk that this would reflect the cultural biases of the organisation too much. Regardless of the practical and ethical problems involved, a quantitative method¹ should be chosen: figures make it possible to cover very different situations, a central problem in humanitarian action being the difficulty of comparing two different missions or the headquarters and the field. This choice should also be realistic: while being as broad as possible, the initial assessment should be in keeping with the organisation's means and ambitions, and should be able to be reproduced.

Launching the initial projects and maintaining motivation

The first stage allows a review of environmental practices to be established as well as consensus about the organisation's values and how these should be applied in relation to this new subject. On this basis, it is relatively easy to identify shortcomings and the priority areas where progress is needed.

It is essential to understand the links between the organisation's mandate and values and the need to manage its environmental impact

The passage from the initial assessment to the action plan can nevertheless be problematic. This is the consequence of using methods from other sectors:

they allow reviews to be carried out without preconceived ideas, but the results can point in directions which are not adapted to the specific characteristics of humanitarian action. For this reason, in addition to the initial quantitative assessment, a qualitative assessment can be carried out, for example, a series of targeted interviews about the activities which have the biggest impact. These can be conducted within the organisation and also among partners and suppliers. It will quickly become apparent that certain positions cannot be reduced whereas others can relatively easily.

The action plan is always specific to the organisation: it depends not only on its situation, but also its history, its mandate and the subjects that are important to it. It is pos-

sible to take inspiration from actions taken by other organisations, and even by companies or public bodies, but it would be a mistake to want to reproduce another organisation's approach.

Of course, the objective of this stage is to rapidly begin to see the initial improvements, but it is important not to forget to bring collaborators on board. The initial assessment will probably have sparked interest and debate in the organisation. This enthusiasm can be difficult to maintain when the process enters a phase which essentially consists of running projects. In the case of Action contre la Faim, the projects carried out concerned, for example, energy management, waste management and purchasing policy, actions which are not necessarily visible apart from for the people who are directly concerned with the implementation.

In addition, the natural tendency in the first action plan will be to give priority to a defensive approach, focused not on genuinely improving performance, but on the reduction of risks for the organisation: financial risks (e.g. the loss of funding²), legal risks, and risks concerning their image (including loss of acceptability)... This orientation can also have a negative effect on staff support.

As the interest and participation of collaborators is indispensable to a sustainable approach, these risks should be taken into account from the preparation stage of the action plan. For example, it is desirable that projects carried out should alternate between actions with a strong impact, which are often technical and long term, and other less essential actions which give more visible or more rapid results³.

Finally, for the approach to be established in the long-term, it is essential to be able to monitor the results obtained and to communicate these. Consequently, this phase should also include the drawing up of indicators. After the initial assessment has helped to identify the positions with the strongest impact and their determining factors, the challenge is to find a way to establish indicators among the flow of information which already exists which are easy to compile and maintain for monthly, or at least bi-annual monitoring.

Setting up a process of continuous improvement

The first projects have been successfully completed. The indicators show that results have improved in relation to the initial assessment. The risk at this stage is that there is a drop in interest and that the subject is considered closed. And yet, it is only the beginning. Only the most obvious failings have been corrected and there is still a lot of room for improvement even if this is not as easy to identify and to put into practice. What is more, the normal development of the organisation, of technologies and operational contexts will create new needs which are impossible to predict in advance.

The process therefore needs to continue, but not in the same way: it is no longer a matter of correcting well identified shortcomings but of entering a process of continuous improvement. Two tools are essential for this: involving stakeholders and making collaborators accountable.

The principle of involving stakeholders⁴ is simple: it is a case of listening to the people who are affected by the organisation's decisions. However, putting this into practice can be more difficult as it involves identifying stakeholders and understanding the reasons for their engagement, setting up mechanisms which make it possible to maintain constructive dialogue, ensuring that interlocutors are representative, etc. Establishing this dialogue is a project in itself.

Nevertheless, experience in the private sector shows that this investment is worthwhile: establishing links with stakeholders is essential to improve environmental performance, but also helps to innovate, anticipate and convince... in short, it helps the organisation to fulfil its mandate.

Although at the beginning there is a need for impetus from the board of directors, once the initial projects have been carried out, it is middle management who have the main role to play. Indeed, a responsible organisation is above all an organisation that makes its collaborators responsible, and this often implies a managerial change: changing job descriptions and evaluation grids, but also facilitating continuous reflection within the organisation, as is the case within ACF's Sustainable Development Club or the French Red Cross's Green Team. In addition to allowing proposals to be made and positive initiatives to be recognised and rewarded, this approach also has the advantage of involving all collaborators and making them think about the goal of humanitarian engagement in their speciality, even if it is very removed from the field.

The Sustainable Development Club

The aim of the Sustainable Development Club is to raise awareness among ACF's collaborators, to share ideas and debate the organisation's orientations without establishing working groups or formal meetings. The club meets once a month during the lunch break, often in the presence of a speaker. In 2012-2013, speakers included ACF's sustainable agriculture reference point, the French Red Cross's Head of Environment and the energy and climate expert, Jean-Marc Jancovici.

Meetings can also be about a particular topic about which the participants give their opinion and propose activities. For example, the meeting in June was dedicated to good habits for reducing the headquarters' impact on the environment. The club is currently organizing awareness-raising events which focus on the five priority habits. More than sixty staff are members of the club.

Towards social responsibility in the humanitarian sector?

This very rapid overview may raise the question: why only deal with the environment? Indeed, this subject is only one aspect of a broader issue: the responsibility of the organisation vis-à-vis the effects of its programmes and its functioning, whether these are environmental, economic or social. There are several reasons to adopt this perspective when considering the question of integrating the environment in an organisation:

- The boundaries between the different types of impact are largely artificial. The issues at stake rarely correspond to such simplistic classification: are soil erosion and the consumption of non-renewable resources environmental, social or economic issues?
- There is synergy between these three subjects. The majority of actions which aim to reduce an organisation's environmental impact can easily be complemented to also take into account economic and social aspects. In particular, the approach described in this article can be applied to a broader area.
- The majority of businesses and public bodies have chosen to deal with these subjects together. Adopting the same perspective allows a large number of experiences and tools which exist already to be reused.

It can therefore make sense to adopt a general social responsibility approach rather than being limited to the organisation's environmental impact. ISO 26000 on social responsibility⁵ provides a useful framework on which to base this kind of approach, even though some of its seven "central questions"⁶ cannot be directly applied to humanitarian organisations.

Considering that an organisation's responsibility goes beyond the geographical and functional limits which had previously been accepted makes us reconsider the roles of the organisation's different departments. Programmes remain the end product and *raison d'être* of an organisation, but they cannot be implemented without support activities such as logistics, finance, fund-raising and research, which represent a significant and often growing number of staff and size of budget. And if we admit that the responsibility of humanitarians is not only to beneficiaries, we see that all these departments have impacts which can be positive or negative, direct or indirect and intentional or unintentional.

Out of ignorance, these impacts are most often negative and unintentional... the whole point of a social responsibility approach is to inverse these two characteristics.

Thibault Laconde

*Head of sustainable development projects
Action contre la Faim*

¹ For example, an ecological footprint assessment, a lifecycle assessment of goods and services produced by the organisation or an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions.

² A growing number of institutional donors either already take impact assessments into account when selecting partners and projects to fund, or plan to do so in the near future (AFD, DFID, CIDA, SIDA...).

³ In the case of ACF, examples of this kind of action are distributing cups to new staff and installing coffee machines which are able to detect them in order to reduce the number of disposable cups, making the default setting of printers recto-verso or using recycled paper or paper from sustainably managed forests.

⁴ Person or body who a) can be significantly affected by the activities, products or services of the organisation, b) whose actions are susceptible to influence the organisation's capacity to successfully put in place its strategies and achieve its objectives.

⁵ Rather than corporate social responsibility, the title of this standard was chosen to encourage its adoption by all kinds of organisation. See: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:26000:ed-1:v1:fr>

⁶ Organisational governance, Human rights, Labour practices, The environment, Fair operating practices, Consumer issues, and Community involvement and development.

Electricity supply for bases

The supply of electricity to bases is a regular problem for humanitarians and is above all a question of operational effectiveness. A poor supply has repercussions for hygiene, health and security at work. Electric generators, which are often used to guarantee that a modicum of electricity is available, have major environmental impacts: noise, vibrations, atmospheric pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, the use of fossil fuels... In order to reduce its dependence on generators while maintaining the reliability of its electricity supply, ACF launched a vast project to improve its infrastructures.

For bases connected to the public network, a battery system is put in place in order to accumulate the electricity while the network is functioning and use it during power cuts. In these cases, the project typically makes it possible to avoid using a generator for power cuts of up to 10 hours. For compounds which do not have access to a public electricity network, a battery system coupled with a small photovoltaic production unit is installed. In these cases, the daily use of the generator typically falls from between 12 and 24 hours before the project to 8 hours after. In all cases, in parallel to installing the system efforts are made to reduce the demand for energy in the bases (assessment of current consumption and recommendations for ways of making reductions).

Considering the savings made on fuel and maintenance and the extension of the lifespan of the generators, it takes about two years to get a return on the investment.

Waste recycling at ACF headquarters

Though reducing the ecological footprint of programmes is sometimes very difficult, at headquarters, on the other hand, there is a wide range of services and departments on which to focus. For example, Action contre la Faim has chosen to put in place an exemplary system for separating and recycling waste. Each work station has a basket for paper and bins for plastic and aluminium, and recently cups have been made available on each floor. There are also boxes for batteries and glass. The paper is sorted a second time by a social enterprise so that it can re-used optimally.

The sorted waste is weighed in order to monitor the results obtained. In 2012, 10 tonnes of paper, 119 kilogrammes of plastic and 143 kilogrammes of aluminium were collected and recycled.

Awareness-raising actions are also carried out to reduce the amount of waste that is produced. Photocopies are specifically targeted: almost 100 000 sheets of paper are printed each month at the organisation's headquarters.

ACF is now looking to extend these good practices to the field.

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Abstracts

Environment and Humanitarian Action

Mainstreaming the environment into humanitarian response: an exploration of opportunities and issues

Eamonn Barrett, Sarah Murfitt, Paul Venton, Environmental Resources Management (ERM), 2007, 37 P.

This report analyses how taking the environment into account in humanitarian programmes can have a positive influence and how it can have a negative influence if it is overlooked. It studies the links which exist between the environment and humanitarian operations: the advantages of taking the environment into account and the challenges for improving how well this is done.

http://proactnetwork.org/proactwebsite/media/download/resources/Ressource_Pack/ERM_Mainstreaming%20environment%20into%20humanitarian%20response_11-2007.pdf

CEDRIG: Climate, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction Integration Guidance

Myriam Steinemann, Madeleine Guyer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2012, 48 P.

The CEDRIG guidelines help to define measures to reduce disaster risk from climate variability, climate change, the degradation of the environment and/or tectonic activities and their impact, and develop more resilient livelihoods. CEDRIG aims to systematically take into account the climate, the environment and DRR when developing a strategy, a programme or a project. CEDRIG helps to manage disaster risks from climate change, environmental degradation and/or natural hazards (risk perspective) and helps to reduce the impact of strategies, programmes and projects on greenhouse gas emissions and/or on the environment (impact perspective). Risk perspective involves adapting to climate change and degraded environments, as well as DRR. Impact perspective is based on the application of climate change mitigation and environmental impact mitigation.

<http://www.sdc-drr.net/cedrig>

Environmental Integration Handbook for EC Development Cooperation

EuropeAid, European Commission, 2007, 190 P.

This handbook provides an operational framework for integrating environmental considerations in EC development cooperation. The environment is one of the three pillars of sustainable development. It is particularly important for poor people who are the most vulnerable to the degradation of natural resources, pollution and ecological disasters. In order to improve the effectiveness of development activities, it is crucial to take environmental considerations into account from the beginning of the operational cycle. The handbook includes information about the impact that the sector has on the environment and measures which can be taken.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/documents/thematic/europeaid-environmental-handbook_en.pdf

Framework for environmental management in assistance programmes

International Review of the Red Cross, ICRC, Assistance Division, 2009, (393-454 pp.) 62 P.

The objective of this document is to define the environmentally-related issues which emerge during ICRC operations. It aims to provide useful and practical advice to delegates responsible for assistance and national staff in two areas: the relationship between assistance activities and the environment on which victims of conflicts depend; and how to take into account the potential positive and negative impacts of assistance without compromising the speed and effectiveness of the ICRC's actions.

It also looks at how to continue to develop an ecological conscience and make sure that environmental questions are systematically included among the factors which should be taken into consideration to produce an effective, rational and timely operation. It encourages teams in the field to systematically evaluate, record and understand the potential consequences and impacts of their activities on the environment and to take reasonable and feasible measures to reduce these impacts and improve the efficiency, usefulness and quality of their programmes.

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/review/2010/irrc-879-environmental-management.pdf>

Green Logistics in Temporary Organizations: A Paradox? Learnings from the Humanitarian Context

2011, 12 P

This article explores the conflicts between the short-term objectives of temporary organisations and the objectives of environmentally-friendly logistics, taking the humanitarian sector as an example.

<http://www.supplychain-forum.com/documents/articles/SCFI/vol12-2-2011-EngLarsson&Vega.pdf>

UNHCR Environmental Guidelines

UNHCR and International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Geneva, 2005, 51 P

Environmental considerations should be taken into account in UNHCR's work with refugees and returnees. Basic considerations such as the supply of potable water, the location of camps or refugee villages, or the supplying of food aid by the HCR's partners all have a direct impact on the state of the environment. And the environment then has a direct effect on the well-being of refugees, returnees and local communities.

<http://www.unhcr.org/3b03b2a04.html>

FRAME Toolkit: Framework for Assessing, Monitoring and Evaluating the environment in refugee-related operations, UNHCR, Care International, 2009

As part of an ongoing effort to provide UNHCR managers and field staff, as well as key operational partners, with appropriate tools that will enable them to look into the issues of environmental assessment, monitoring and evaluation, UNHCR, together with a range of organisations and specialist individuals, has prepared this collection of tools and guidance under a project known as FRAME – Framework for Assessing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Environment in Refugee-related Operations. Available in English and French.

<http://www.unhcr.org/4a97d1039.html>

Integrating the environment into humanitarian action and early recovery

Groupe URD, UNEP.

In response to the multiple environmental impacts during a crisis, UNEP and Groupe URD developed a training kit which helps humanitarian actors to integrate environmental considerations into the development of their programmes as well as the planning, design and implementation of their activities. The 11 modules can be adjusted to local contexts and can be selected for specific training needs or for different course lengths.

<http://www.urd.org/Kit-de-formation-integrer-l>

Resource centre: Mainstreaming the Environment into Humanitarian Action, UNEP

This site is a resource centre set up by UNEP which aims to promote the integration of environmental considerations into the planning of humanitarian programmes and their implementation throughout the world.

<http://postconflict.unep.ch/humanitarianaction/index.html>

Environment and crises

From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment
UNEP, 2009, 50 P.

This report discusses the main links between the environment, conflict and peacebuilding. It looks at how conflicts damage the environment and natural resources through a combination of direct and indirect impacts, and due to the collapse of governance and the diversion of financial resources, but also how these resources can contribute either to conflict or peacebuilding. It shows how cooperation in the area of the environment and aid for sustainable development can help to achieve the broader objectives of peacebuilding, and how integrating environmental factors at an early stage can strengthen confidence, contribute to reconciliation and support the implementation of programmes for peace. It describes fourteen case studies and includes important recommendations with regard to taking natural resources and the environment into account in conflict management.

http://www.unep.org/pdf/pcdmb_policy_01.pdf

The Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT): To identify acute environmental risks immediately following disasters
Version 1.1, UNEP, 2009, 75 P.

The Flash Environmental Assessment Tool helps to identify existing or potential acute environmental impacts that pose risks for humans, human life-support functions and ecosystems, following sudden-onset natural disasters.

https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/FEAT_Version_1.1.pdf

Guidelines for rapid environmental impact assessment in disasters, Version 4.4, Charles Kelly
Benfield Hazard Research Centre, University College London, Care International, April 2005, 109 P.

These guidelines help to assess the environmental consequences of natural disasters.

http://proactnetwork.org/proactwebsite/media/download/resources/Ressource_Pack/REA_guidelines.v4.4.pdf

Climate change: impacts on the environment

International Review of the Red Cross – Environment
n° 879, September 2010, 303 P

This special edition focusing on the Environment has several articles on the links between the environment, armed conflicts and international law and on the impacts of climate change on human societies and humanitarian action.

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/international-review/review-879-environment/index.jsp>

Consult the full bibliography on the Groupe URD website:

<http://www.urd.org/Bibliography?lang=en>

Events

Humanitarian Environment Network meeting, Paris, 4 October

A Humanitarian Environment Network meeting was held in Paris on 4 October on the theme of waste management in humanitarian contexts. The meeting was an opportunity for each organisation to share experiences on this subject and to discuss possible ways of making improvements. A summary note will be produced and made available to the public. The theme of the next meeting, which is planned for December, will be environmental impact assessments.

Contact : Blanche Renaudin (brenaudin@urd.org)

Professional training courses organised by Groupe URD

Groupe URD will be running a large number of sessions in France, Europe and Haiti in the coming months, three of which will be on integrating the environment in humanitarian action.

In Europe :

- « Evaluating the Quality of Humanitarian Action », Plaisians, 21-25 October 2013 (30 hours)
- « Integrating Environmental Issues into Humanitarian Action », Geneva, 19-20 November 2013 - in English (14 hours)
- « Integrating Environmental Issues into Humanitarian Action », Brussels, Spring 2014, (dates to be confirmed), - in English (14 hours)
- « Aid Quality: challenges and methods », Paris, 15-17 January 2014 - in French (14 hours)

Contact: Anna Lear (alear@urd.org)

In Haïti :

- « Integrating the Environment in Humanitarian Action », Port-au-Prince, Winter 2013 - dates to be confirmed (14 hours)
- « Evaluating the Quality of Humanitarian Action », session 1, Port- au-Prince, 25 – 29 November 2013 (30 hours)
- « Evaluating the Quality of Humanitarian Action », session 2, Port- au-Prince, 9-13 December 2013 (30 hours)
- « Reconstruction in post-crisis contexts », Port-au-Prince, Spring 2014 - dates to be confirmed (30 hours)

Contact: Isabelle Fortin (ifortin@urd.org)

World Conference on Humanitarian Studies, Istanbul, 24-27 October 2013

This year, the World Conference on Humanitarian Studies is being organised jointly with the Third Istanbul Human Security Conference for three days of exchange on four themes: Human Security Debate: Lessons from Humanitarianism; Politics and Practices of Natural Disasters and Disaster Response; Socio-economic Realities of Humanitarian Crises; and, New Players in the Humanitarian Arena, with Special Attention to Turkey. Groupe URD will be involved in Panel 42, “Building resilience - potentials and approaches to providing coherent response”.

More information: <http://www.humanitarianstudiesconference.org/>

AidEx 2013, Brussels, 13-14 November 2013

The 2013 edition of AidEx will be held in Brussels on 13 and 14 November. Groupe URD will be involved in two conferences in English related to the theme of resilience on 13 November: “The multi-dimensional realities of sustainability and resilience” (14.00 - 14.45) and “Resilience is a development issue, not a humanitarian issue” (15.15-16.00), as well as the closing session of the first day.

For more information: <http://www.aid-expo.com>

International Solidarity Week, 16-24 November 2013

The 16th edition of the International Solidarity Week will take place throughout France on 16 to 24 November. Each year since 1998, on the third week of November, International Solidarity Week is a national awareness-raising event about international solidarity and sustainable development. A large number of events will be taking place throughout the country.

For more information, go to: <http://www.lasemaine.org>



Groupe URD

Groupe URD (Urgence – Réhabilitation – Développement) is a non-profit research, evaluation and training institute. Its main objective is to help improve humanitarian practices in favour of crisis-affected people.

Further information :

www.urd.org

Humanitarian Aid on the move

Humanitarian Aid on the Move – a bilingual biannual review – aims to share the results of work on important issues currently facing the sector.

We regularly invite external contributors and provide links to other publications. To propose an article, contact Jeanne Taisson: jtaisson@urd.org

Further reading on certain topics and full articles by the authors can be found on the Groupe URD website: www.urd.org/Humanitarian-Aid-on-the-move

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