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Humanitarian assistance and rural development: responding to new challenges
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Donor coordination in humanitarian assistance: progress made and challenges ahead
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Executive Summary

Overall

The picture of humanitarian aid over the last ten years has been generally upwards of total volume. The GHA programme estimates that totals increased from \$15 to \$18 billion from 2007 to 2008 with this figures now being calculated suggesting at least parity on 2008. However there are marked differences year-on-year in where this money is spent, through which actors, via which financial mechanisms and finally funding what activities. Each choice naturally means the loss of funding of an alternative – how do food and agriculture fare?

Donors

The trend for OECD DAC donors has been generally upwards with 2008 being the highest value for humanitarian aid, at just over US\$11.2 billion; preliminary data suggests a similar figure for 2009. This US\$11.2 billion is equivalent to 9.3% of the US\$121 billion of total overseas development aid of the DAC group.

There are some quite different donor profiles within this aid group; for example whilst the US remains the highest single contributor in terms of volume it is not the most generous per capita.

The data from donors outside of the DAC group would suggest a marked drop in aid from 2007 and 2008 though the top three countries, all Gulf States, remain in those places.

Recipients

The first question would be how are needs articulated because it is on the basis of need that countries should receive funds. Certainly the UN appeals would suggest a shortfall of funding year-on-year, usually about 30%. Funding is generally concentrated on the same countries year-on-year. An analysis of DAC donor priorities would find Sudan in first place for the last four years with Ethiopia, Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) regularly placed in the top three.

Donors outside the DAC group favour quite different priorities, with funding dominated by regional or cultural concerns, where OPT, Pakistan and Afghanistan account for the bulk of humanitarian aid.

Recipients via the CERF would suggest the 'evening-out' of funding (its focus on under-funded and forgotten emergencies) to those countries not seen on donor priorities.

The regional pattern of humanitarian aid over the last ten years reveals a definite escalation of aid to sub-Saharan Africa, a peak for the middle-east in 2003 largely accounted for by aid to Iraq and its neighbours.

Agriculture and Food

Mapping out funding to humanitarian food and agriculture is complicated by the inconsistent use of terms in the main aid databases, the DAC and the FTS.

In comparing figures of total ODA you'll see that the global trend for agriculture from the DAC countries is upwards, matched largely by emergency food aid. If you look only at those countries receiving long-term humanitarian aid you'll see how emergency food aid is much more a dominant part of ODA although countries do vary one from another.

The regional trends show some marked differences in terms of agriculture and food. Food as a % of total humanitarian aid

Context and Concentration

If there was one particular thing to remember with all this information it might be that finally the international community spends the bulk of its aid, of whatever kind, in the same countries year on year. What changes?

What is the GHA Programme?

Funded by five donor nations (Netherlands, United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden and Canada) the GHA programme's objectives are to map out in detail the full picture of humanitarian financing, providing access to no-spin data and information, encouraging debate and providing a global perspective beyond individual crises.

See our website for full details: