

“Humanitarian Networks for Quality and Accountability - Asia”

11 November 2014 at Hotel The Park, New Delhi - India

Background of the event:

The Sphere Project is a voluntary initiative for bringing humanitarian agencies together to achieve a common goal. The aim of this project is to improve the quality of humanitarian action and perpetrate accountability of humanitarian work against beneficiaries, donors and affected communities. The Sphere Project was formed in 1997 led by the Executive Board consists of representatives of the institution's humanity network.

Sphere India is a national coalition of humanitarian agencies in India. Launched in 2002, Sphere India aims at contributing towards the quality of humanitarian response by ensuring improved coordination among various stakeholders in humanitarian work, while promoting the spirit and commitment embodied in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

Sphere India has been on the board of the Sphere Project since 2009 and hosted a meeting of Sphere Project Board in New Delhi on 12 and 13 November, 2014. This event provided an excellent opportunity for a wider consultation with stakeholders in the region to strengthen humanitarian network and to synchronize their efforts with Sphere Project Strategy 2020.



Objectives of the Workshop are:

- To have shared view of good practices and experiences by different humanitarian networks in Asia/South Asia region
- To comprise an informed view of recent developments in humanitarian quality and accountability and the role of different stakeholders and local networks in achieving new goals
- To strengthen networking with similar humanitarian networks in the region

The participants of event included representatives of humanitarian networks, the focal point of the Sphere Project from various countries, Government Officials, INGOs, National NGOs, UN, Corporate Foundation, academics, practitioners and Media.

Supported by:



Opening Address:

Major Gen J.K. Bansal,

VSM, NDMA, Government of India

He emphasized on the realization of the impact of a disaster on the lives of individuals and communities. Disasters can be mitigated. Ultimate goal is to ensure that best possible help is provided and reaches to a person in crisis. There is a need of **harmonization of GO-NGO efforts during the crisis situations.**



Dr. Satendra,

NIDM Executive Director, Government of India

He highlighted the importance of **capacity building aspects of disaster management.** Disasters can be managed well and losses can be reduced by building capacity. At present, NIDM is running 90 training programs, providing technical and financial support to 30 centers in country and undertaking 40 research works to build the capacity of government officials and other stakeholders in disaster management.



Updates on South Asian Regional Process

Mr. RC Neupane,

Sphere Nepal

The development of South Asia regional process: Standards development: The Sphere Project, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership and People in Aid.

He enlightened upon **need to develop network of networks (regional network) so that we can translate knowledge.**



Humanitarian Conclave - Gallery Walk



AFGANISTAN



Najibullah Tajali
Deputy Director

Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief & Development (ACBAR)

ACBAR works for the promotion of Code of Conduct **for NGOs working in Afghanistan**. It also builds the capacity of member organizations in Afghanistan by imparting trainings on NGO Code of Conduct, NGO Law, Labor Law, Income Tax Law, Human Rights in Conflict and Sphere Standards throughout the country.

Challenges: Lack of or inadequate access to resources due to insecurity, discrimination based on class and gender, poor infrastructure, **lack of political will and support for a principled (independent and impartial) humanitarian assistance**.

SRILANKA



S. Jayanthi
Project Coordinator
Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA)

Champion accountability, effective collaboration and coordination amongst and within the government, donors and other humanitarian actors. Develop and promote guidelines, standards and principles relevant to the humanitarian sector for following:

- Sphere Standard
- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)
- People in Aid (PIA)
- Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS)
- Minimum Economic Recovery Standard (MERS)
- Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS)
- Minimum Standards for Education (INEE)
- Difficulties in getting through to public and private sectors.
- Staff turnover in humanitarian field

Challenges: Difficulties in getting through to public and private sectors, staff turnover in humanitarian field, **funding is available only during crisis and not before disasters. The funding is not sufficient for printing books, capacity building and evaluation.**

NEPAL



Bishal Nath Upreti
Chairperson
Disaster Preparedness Network (DPNet- Nepal)

Effective national level platform that can serve for coordination, capacity building, advocacy and knowledge dissemination for DRR in Nepal

Challenge: Fund limitation to sustain secretariat

It is high time to build up an effective regional network and partnerships not only among NGOs, academia and civil societies, but also among the governmental organizations for the promotion of Humanitarian Standards and Accountability

BANGLADESH

Nirapad Network

- Mobilizing Sphere Community in Bangladesh
- Representative of Bangladesh government DRR Platform
- Providing Technical support to NARRI and DeSHARI Consortiums
- Rolling out accountability for ChristianAid and Diakonia and its partners;
- **Promoting “Disaster Clinic” for knowledge sharing**

CAMBODIA



Kannaro Kep
Chairperson

Cambodia Humanitarian Forum (CHF)

Established in 2012 - to build the capacity of local NGOs in emergency response, information sharing, coordination and advocacy with the government to have Disaster Management Law for the country

Sphere standard is integrated into the training curriculum for CHF members as part of capacity building

Challenges: Knowledge of Sphere and HAP are not well spread among the other humanitarian relief practitioners, lack of IEC materials, some international NGOs ignore the standards, lack of commitment from some donors and government does not want to integrate the standards into the DM national law.

INDONESIA



H. Iskandar Leman
Chairperson

Indonesia Society for Disaster Management, MPBI

Informal network involved in sharing, exchange of information, update, tools, advocacy towards quality and accountability in humanitarian actions

Challenge: Humanitarian leadership, understanding the policy context and tour of duty

Experience Sharing by Different Humanitarian Networks in the Region:
Afghanistan, Srilanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Indonesia



Live Experience Sharing by Akhtar

“2014 J&K Floods is the worst I have seen. The place I have lived in all my life looked nothing like it used to. I worked as a volunteer, rescued and saved people as much as I could, but the need for a systematic and unified response was something that I felt were needed. In that pursuit I met Sphere India and began to participate in their activities. Now when I am a staff in Sphere India, I find myself in a better position to help people.”



Collaborative Initiative

Development of Sub Divisional Disaster Management Plan (SDDMP) for Majuli Island by district administration in collaboration with ACTED, NEICORD with technical support from Sphere India.



Key Points Emerging from the Panel Discussion:

The role of local networks and different stakeholders in strengthening Quality and Accountability in Humanitarian Action.

Prof. Santosh Kumar: Executive Director, SAARC Disaster Management Center (SDMC)

SAARC established DM framework for 8 countries – Afghanistan, Srilanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Maldives and Bhutan and there is a space for CSOs and humanitarian organizations in it. In addition, SDMC has also developed South Asia Regional Response Mechanism to support disaster response initiatives of various governments.

SDMC has developed the DM framework and the merger of four institutions will happen soon. This reconstituted institution will be called as “SAARC Environment and Disaster Management Center” Meanwhile SDMC is also working on **advocacy and highlighting good practices** in managing disasters.

SAARC is realizing the importance of partnership with regional networks and will find space to have SAARC secretariat through advocacy and workshops.

Mr. Unni Krishnan: Chairperson, Sphere Project

The new vision and the next Sphere Project Board Strategy give great opportunities to values and principles that Sphere and Sphere's companion standards represent and take quality and standards of humanitarian action to the next level

People's power: Ordinary and informed people and local groups will drive exchange in a more systematic way. Collective negotiations will improve quality of assistance, in real time. Media, especially local and social media and real-time communication and feedback will be a key shaper. Media and social media will be emerging as a source of funding -through their appeals and contributions.

G. Padmanabhan: Emergency Analyst and Officer in Charge DM Unit, UNDP

Focus on **Local Networks: Actions happen locally and these should be promoted within this perceptive and cultural context.** External quality and accountability factor has to close to the ground as much possible.

Ms. Selvi: Executive Director, Credibility Alliance

She focused on the difference between **accountability and responsibility**, She explained that responsibility can be delegated but accountability cannot be delegated.

Credibility alliance was formed to answer these questions whether the existing law and framework in India can support the accountability challenges faced by NGOs especially grass-root level organizations.



Recommendations for strengthening Quality and Accountability in Humanitarian Actions

- Endorsement of regulations and policy
- Capacity building
- Availability of resources: fund, material, text
- Networking of Global/Regional Networks
- Shared Framework for Action at the Global, Regional, National and Local level



Sphere India

National Coalition of Humanitarian Agencies in India

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