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Overview

Colombia has the highest recorded number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world, with 3.9 million people – 8.5% of the population – displaced since 1996, and between 150,000 and 200,000 continuing to be displaced each year.¹

The vast majority of Colombia’s IDPs have been forced from their homes as a result of the complex ongoing conflict between leftist guerrilla groups and the Colombian armed forces – which began in the mid-1960s – also involving right-wing paramilitary groups that became active in the 1990s. Since the official demobilisation of the paramilitaries in 2006, any groups still operating with links to former paramilitary groups have been labelled by the Government, “Post-Demobilisation Armed Groups” (PDGA). A process for negotiating peace was formally announced in October 2012, when President Santos announced a framework agreement for peace negotiations with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the largest and most prominent of Colombia’s guerrilla groups. Negotiation talks between the two sides have since been taking place in Cuba.

Colombia has one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated legal systems in the world for addressing its IDP population, centred on a particular piece of legislation – Law 387 – which recognises IDPs as a special population. Law 387 states that the government is responsible for preventing forced displacement, protecting and assisting people who are displaced by violence, and searching for durable solutions. There is also statutory responsibility at departmental and regional levels for preventing and responding to forced displacement, with local governmental agencies working in partnership with NGOs to provide direct support to the displaced in each region. The Victims and Land Restitution Law passed in 2011 made it incumbent on the Government to compensate victims of the conflict through land restitution or financial compensation.

There is a strong and active civil society in Colombia spearheaded by the Church and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), but community-level organisations and activists also play an important role. Seen as politically independent, such organisations are often better able to deliver key services on the ground.

Despite being a middle income country, Colombia has high levels of social inequality and poverty, with almost 34% of the population living below the national poverty line and 8.2% living on less than $1.25/day.² In 2009, 83% of Colombia’s IDPs were thought to be living in extreme poverty.³ This paper analyses the domestic and international response to Colombia’s humanitarian crisis and examines the resources flows to and within Colombia, including official development assistance (ODA), humanitarian aid, counter-narcotics funding, security investments, domestic resources, foreign direct investment and remittances.

¹ UNOCHA, http://www.unocha.org/ocha2012-13/colombia
² http://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia
³ DNP, 2009, www.dnp.gov.co
The humanitarian crisis in Colombia is characterised primarily by mass internal displacement caused by the ongoing conflict, which involves left-wing guerrilla groups, right-wing paramilitary groups and the Government of Colombia’s (GoC) armed forces. Historically, displacement has occurred mostly in rural areas where land has been taken from civilians by guerrilla and paramilitary groups, often to be used for the illegal narcotics trade.

The two main guerrilla groups – the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) – emerged in the mid-1960s. Both claimed to be fighting for the rights of Colombia’s poor against a violent government, promoting socialist values and a strong land-reform agenda. Paramilitary groups initially grew out of the private armies of cocaine cartels in a bid to protect their illegal business interests from guerrilla groups, who had begun using the drugs trade in order to finance their activities. The armed forces have been fighting the guerrillas and working to disarm the paramilitary in an attempt to forge political and social stability.

The violence, which has been exacerbated by the production and trafficking of narcotics, has caused high levels of internal displacement. Human rights and protection issues remain prevalent. Both the guerrillas and paramilitary have been accused of drug cultivation and trafficking, and all three parties have been criticised for human rights violations. In the past few years, analysts have noted an increase in the use of illegal mining to replace declining coca crop revenues.4

Ongoing conflict-related issues in Colombia include: forced displacement and large-scale recruitment of children by armed groups; sexual violence; threats, pressure, extortion and attacks on civilian populations; massacres and killings; landmine accidents; and mobility restrictions. According to the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Agency (UNHCR), targeted killings of land-restitution and victims’ group leaders are on the increase, and the number of massacres went up by 40% in 2010, followed by another 30% in the first half of 2011.5 Colombia also has the highest annual rate of landmine accidents.

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victims in the world, with almost two-thirds of Colombian territories affected. In 2012, there were 479 recorded victims of mines and explosives.\(^6\)

To date, almost 250,000 people are thought to have died as a result of the conflict, and between 3.6 million and 5.2 million have been displaced.\(^7\)

**Natural disasters**

Colombia is vulnerable to natural disasters, including floods, landslides and earthquakes. Most recently, devastating floods in 2010 and 2011 affected 4 million people.\(^8\)

Natural disasters are also responsible for low levels of displacement: the GoC’s National System for Disaster Prevention and Response (SNPAD) estimates that the recent floods caused up to 100,000 people to lose their homes in September and October 2011 alone. Many natural disaster situations disproportionately impact IDPs due to their location in marginalised neighbourhoods. These displaced people may live in the flood plain, or have homes more vulnerable to earthquakes due to poor construction. This issue of ‘double vulnerability’ requires specific attention on the part of humanitarian actors when they design assistance delivery. The harsh topography of Colombia and poor road infrastructure has meant that humanitarian access due to such events as landslides can cut off large areas, requiring helicopters to deliver aid during emergencies.

**Poverty**

![Figure 2: Proportion of Colombia’s population living on under $1.25/day, 1999–2010](image)

While the proportion of Colombians living in absolute poverty (less than US$1.25/day) fell from over 20% in 2002 to 8.2% in 2010,\(^9\) 34% of Colombians still live below the national poverty line and 15.8% – more than 7 million people – live on less than $2 a day.

**Poverty reduction plan and multidimensional poverty**

Colombia’s 2010–2014 [national development plan](http://www.unocha.org/ocha2012-13/colombia) has three pillars: employment, poverty reduction and security. Poverty reduction has been given top priority out of these areas.

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\(^6\) PAICMA, provided by UN OCHA Colombia

\(^7\) [Business Week](http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-07-26/no-easy-road-to-peace-in-colombia)

\(^8\) UNOCHA, [http://www.unocha.org/ocha2012-13/colombia](http://www.unocha.org/ocha2012-13/colombia)

In 2011, the GoC adopted a new poverty-reduction strategy, using the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative’s (OPHI) multidimensional poverty index (MPI) to monitor and measure different indicators of multidimensional poverty. The MPI complements income-based poverty measures by reflecting the multiple deprivations that people face at the same time. It identifies deprivations across health, education and living standards, and shows the number of people who are multidimensionally poor and the deprivations that they face at the household level.

The MPI Colombia poverty reduction strategy aims to reduce multidimensional poverty by 13% - from 35% in 2008 to 22% in 2014 - by addressing social and health-related aspects of poverty in the following five equally rated areas:

1. Household education conditions
2. Childhood and youth conditions
3. Labour
4. Health
5. Access to household utilities and living conditions.

The MPI ranks countries and sub-national districts to demonstrate the percentage and number of the population in severe poverty, as well as those vulnerable to poverty. Colombia’s MPI rate was 0.022 in 2010, ranking it 38 out of 104 countries. Around 5.4% of Colombia’s population is MPI poor, approximately 2.5 million people.

At sub-national level, three regions have more than twice the national incidence of multidimensional poverty – Bolivar Sur in Cordoba, Guajira in the Magdalena, and the Pacific Coast. There appears to be a high level of regional correlation between poverty levels and IDP figures.¹⁰

**Human development index**

In 2012, Colombia scored 0.719 in the Human Development Index (HDI), ranking it 91 out of 187 countries. While its score is above the global average, it is lower than the regional average of 0.741.

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¹⁰ [http://www.colombiassh.org/site/IMG/png/EXP062008.png](http://www.colombiassh.org/site/IMG/png/EXP062008.png)
Internally displaced people

Forced displacement has traditionally been caused by guerrilla and paramilitary groups in order to establish or expand their presence, and strengthen their political and military control in a specific region or area. Displacement in order that guerrilla or paramilitary groups might benefit financially from the land – often through coca plantations or other illegal activities relating to the narcotics trade – is also common.

Protracted displacements of individuals and families account for 93% of all displacement in Colombia, with mass displacement (50 people or more) making up the remainder. 92% of displaced people are from rural areas, and although the main pattern of displacement is rural-to-urban, intra-urban displacement has been increasing over recent years.

Afro-Colombians and indigenous people are disproportionately affected by the conflict. In 2010, an estimated 83% of the displaced population were from Afro-Colombian or indigenous communities, yet these groups make up only 5% of the general population. In 2009, the Colombian Constitutional Court issued a ruling stating that 34 indigenous groups in Colombia were at risk of extinction, in part due to the over-representation of these groups among those affected by the conflict.

There is some disagreement over IDP figures between the GoC – which only began officially counting IDPs in 2000 – and civil society organisations, which have been monitoring figures since 1985. The government has counted 3.6 million displaced people since 2000, but the Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES) – a Colombian organisation monitoring human

Global Humanitarian Assistance

rights and displacement – estimates that 5.2 million Colombians have been internally displaced since 1985. In 2009, the UN Human Rights Agency (UNHCR) estimated that 3.7 million people in Colombia were in need of international protection; at the time, this was the highest number in any country in the world.\textsuperscript{15}

Due to the protracted nature of the crisis, displacement figures vary from year to year depending on security levels, and displacement tends to occur wherever the conflict is currently active. However, no official IDP figures have been shared with the international community since December 2011, and the figures for the last quarter of that year were incomplete. The lack of recent IDP registration figures has complicated the international community’s response and contributed to a reduced visibility of the issue of forced displacement in 2012 and 2013. In this period the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Colombia has invested heavily in monitoring IDP events in an effort to keep a track of IDP figures, and in 2012 it recorded over 40,000 new cases of IDPs in this way. This is higher than the previous year, and is thought to show only one seventh of all displacements taking place.

**Figure 4: IDPs recorded by GoC, 2000–2011**

![Graph showing IDPs recorded by GoC, 2000–2011.](image)

*Source: Development Initiatives based on OCHA Colombia and Colombian government*

### Domestic response

**Government revenues**

With a growing economy and a strong executive and legislative focus, Colombia is making good progress towards overcoming its socio-economic inequality and putting an end to its violent past. The Colombian economy grew by 7% in 2011 and its gross domestic product (GDP) has almost doubled in the last 20 years – from 246 trillion Colombian pesos in 1993, to 471 trillion Colombian pesos 2012. There have, however, been short periods of year-on-year GDP decreases in that period, the most recent example of which being a drop of US$8.4 billion – or 3.4% – between 2008 and 2009. This latest drop was largely attributable to the global financial crisis, and Colombia experienced less of a drop in its GDP than the global average.

\textsuperscript{15} Caritas, [http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/BridgingtheGap_ENdefinite.pdf](http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/BridgingtheGap_ENdefinite.pdf)
Each state has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected state has the primary role in the initiation, organisation, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.” (The UN humanitarian resolution, Resolution 46/182 of 1991)

The legal context

“Each state has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected state has the primary role in the initiation, organisation, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.” (The UN humanitarian resolution, Resolution 46/182 of 1991)

The Central Registry for the Displaced Population (RUPD) was implemented after Law 387 had made it incumbent on the government to retain up-to-date information on the number of displaced people at all times. It is intended to better enable the government to target new policies to the present needs of its IDPs. (See the Unified Victims Registry (RUV) in Victims and Land Restitution Bill, below.)

In a landmark ruling in 2004 known as decision T-025, Colombia’s Constitutional Court concluded that the State was not in compliance with Law 387 and had violated the rights of IDPs by failing to provide them with adequate assistance, declaring the situation an “unconstitutional state of affairs”. The GoC subsequently committed more than US$2 billion for the protection and assistance of IDPs for the period 2005–2010.

Despite progress made in the enjoyment [by IDPs] of certain rights, overall data on the enjoyment of rights and on the effectiveness of changes made [by the government] to improve institutional, coordination and budgeting capacities do not show that systematic progress has been made towards the enjoyment of all rights by IDPs and towards the overcoming of the conditions that prompted the ruling [of 2004].” (Constitutional Court, 2011, IDMC translation)

Since the ruling, the government has gone some way towards improving the capacity of its humanitarian response to the crisis. It has consolidated its humanitarian coordination processes by
establishing **three key policies** specifically designed to address displacement and the IDP situation: prevention and protection; emergency humanitarian assistance; and socio-economic stabilisation.

However, in spite of the recent change in discourse by the government shifting in favour of victims of the conflict, IDPs continue to have limited access to support. Consequently, in October 2011, the Constitutional Court upheld its 2004 ruling that the government’s failure to address the IDP situation amounted to a violation of their human rights and was fundamentally unconstitutional. The government later passed the **Victims and Land Restitution Bill**, a new piece of legislation that has become known as the Victims’ Law.

### The Victims and Land Restitution Bill

The GoC passed the Victims and Land Restitution Bill in October 2011, in response to a ruling by the Constitutional Court which found that the Government was violating the human rights of IDPs. The Bill, also known as the Victims’ Law, aims to compensate an estimated four million victims over the next ten years and includes significant provisions for the restitution of two million hectares of land – or, in cases where land restitution is not possible, to provide financial compensation – to those displaced between 1991 and 2010. A new department within the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Restitution of Abandoned Land, has been created with the sole remit of managing the land restitution process.

A central database of all victims of the conflict – the **Unified Victims Registry (RUV)** – was also established. The RUV combines all other pre-existing victims’ databases, including the RUPD and a number of other smaller lists that were held by Church groups and NGOs. The RUV is effectively merged with the RUPD, and is also connected to a separate database documenting land restitution cases.

Although it is still too early to know the full extent of the Bill’s long-term consequences, its passing could have major implications for the Colombian State in terms of what it is now legally obliged to provide for its displaced population. In 2012, 157,013 people were awarded reparation and psychosocial care, and the Government is aiming to provide assistance to a further 151,000 victims in 2013. By February 2013, the land restitution office, established under the new law, had received more than 30,000 restitution claims, and judges had issued 16 rulings ordering the return of approximately 500 hectares of land.\(^\text{16}\)

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

The absence of an international protection regime for IDPs led to the 1998 creation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, by the then Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Francis M. Deng. The principles gave rights to IDPs and indicated the obligations of governments and the international community. Although not legally binding, they have gained international acceptance and several countries have used them as a basis to create their own laws and policies relating to the treatment of their IDPs.

The Principles played a crucial role in Colombia, namely by providing a set of criteria by which to define the fundamental rights of its IDPs, and by outlining the minimum standards for the government to meet their needs. They were later used as a basis for reforming the national infrastructure for the protection of displaced people, and the Constitutional Court cited the Guiding Principles as a basis for its 2000/2001 judgments in support of IDPs. The principles are repeatedly referenced in Colombian law.

Source: Brookings Institute

Framework for supporting IDPs

After passing the Victims’ Law the Government created the Victims’ Unit, the Land Restitution Unit and the Centre for Historical Memory, which are jointly responsible for the law’s implementation.

The main government agency responsible for coordinating assistance and services to meet the humanitarian needs of Colombia’s IDPs is the Department for Social Prosperity (Departamento para la Prosperidad Social, or DPS – previously Acción Social, or The Presidential Agency for Social Action and Internal Cooperation). Sitting within the DPS is the National System for Disaster Prevention and Response (SNPAD), which works across government departments, ministries and agencies to address the issue of displacement. The SNPAD represents agencies at the governmental level as well as the wider system of response agencies to IDP issues at ground level, including departmental and municipal committees.

The reparation and assistance programme, which is designed with direct input from victims and communities, includes registration, compilation of testimonials, financial reparation, physical and psychosocial rehabilitation, and special assistance for Afro-Colombians and other ethnic groups, as well as women and children.

Once registered with the RUPD, IDPs receive immediate direct assistance in the form of benefits for three months, with a further three months of support available in cases of extreme need. Long-term support to people living in absolute poverty is provided through Red UNIDOS, a government programme whose wider remit is to address extreme poverty by providing coherent social protection over time, and which puts beneficiaries through various social programmes. However, many officially registered IDPs are not receiving Red UNIDOS assistance as they are not thought to be living in absolute poverty.
Local authorities are responsible for implementing elements of Colombia’s National Plan for Attention to the Displaced Population, and for designing and coordinating the response at a local level. However, there have been reports of newly elected officials being linked to armed paramilitary and guerrilla groups blocking the land restitution process in some areas.17

Between 2000 and 2008, 40% of requests for registration were turned down, mainly due to a Government Decree stating that a) the veracity of a person’s claim had to be proven before they were registered, and b) people had to register within one year of being displaced. A 2009 court ruling ordered the government to take measures to reduce under-registration and the previous one-year limit for requesting registration was overturned. Although under-registration has since decreased, the most recent data suggests that 23% of IDPs have still not registered, either because they have not come forward for registration, or because their request has been denied.18 Many of those who have not come forward for registered live in rural areas and cannot access support due to government support structures being located in cities, and there also remains a degree of fear of being identified.

Furthermore, current rules state that any individual IDPs claiming to have been displaced by paramilitary groups (or PDGAs) are not considered victims of the armed conflict under the 2011 Victims’ Law, and as such are not eligible for land or financial restitution. Consequently, large numbers of people who were displaced by paramilitary/PDGAs are claiming when they file for assistance that they were displaced by guerrillas in order to qualify.

Figure 6: Timeline of domestic developments

1997: Law 387 is passed
Definition of an IDP developed; IDPs’ rights identified

1997: RUPD (Central Registry for the Displaced Population) is created
Central registry allowing applicants to claim benefits and giving GoC access to information about victims

2004: Decision T-025
Constitutional Court declares the IDP situation as an "unconstitutional state of affairs", summarised as institutional impediments and lack of financial resources

2005: Acción Social (Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation) is created
Previously known as RSS (The Social Solidarity Network), Acción Social provided coordinated and supervised assistance to IDPs

2011: DPS (Department of Social Prosperity) is created
Replacing Acción Social after the passing of law 1448, DPS is responsible for setting policies, plans, programmes and projects for assistance, care and compensation to victims of violence, social inclusion, attention to vulnerable groups and social and economic reintegration

2011: Victims and Land Restitution: Law 1448 is passed
Law 1448 aims to restitute 2 million hectares of land to Colombia’s IDP population

Source: Development Initiatives
Domestic resources destined for IDPs

Government funding to IDPs increased dramatically following decision T-025 in 2004, rising from 437 million Colombian pesos (COP) that year to 1.9 billion in 2012.

Figure 7: Domestic IDP expenditure (COP billions) and IDP expenditure as % national budget

State funding to IDPs as a proportion of the national budget has increased by 24 times since 2000 reaching over 1% in 2010, following a series of court rulings in which the GoC was found not to be adequately addressing the needs of IDPs.

A Financial Plan for the implementation of the Victims’ Law was adopted in December 2011, setting aside COP6 billion (US$500 million) of the following year’s national budget – the main areas of expenditure being COP22 billion for assistance and COP24 billion for reparation measures – and COP54 billion (US$30 billion) over the next ten years. The Plan places an obligation on individual government departments to set aside resources in their own internal budgets for the law’s implementation. It has not been publicly specified how much of the ten-year budget is intended to go towards property restitution.

Government response to natural disasters

Colombia is widely acknowledged as having comparatively good disaster response mechanisms, as well as the political will and financial capacity to launch a major response. However, in the case of the 2010/2011 floods, national capacity was overwhelmed. Although the government mobilised significant financial resources (US$2.7 billion) for responding to the floods, it struggled to channel

and programme resources at a local level, particularly in conflict-affected areas. An estimated 40% of affected people in some areas had still not received assistance one year after the floods first hit.  

A recent study commissioned by the World Bank recommended that disaster risk management became a State policy, emphasising that improving land use and land occupation conditions is a priority in reducing the impact of disasters. The World Bank is supporting Colombia to proactively address disaster risk through a long-term contribution to the country’s national framework on disaster risk management and a catastrophe risk financing strategy. The Bank’s engagement has evolved from one primarily focused on disaster recovery to now encompassing three pillars:

1. Understanding disaster risk.
2. Implementing risk reduction activities.
3. Disaster risk financing and insurance.

In May 2012 the GoC issued Law 1523, a new legal framework for natural disaster and risk management.

**Figure 8: Number of people affected by natural disasters in Colombia, 2003–2012 (’000)**

![Graph showing number of people affected by natural disasters in Colombia, 2003-2012.](image)

Source: Development Initiatives based on EM-DAT CRED data

Natural disasters in Colombia are estimated to have caused losses of over US$7 billion in the last forty years, with more than 28,000 disaster events registered in that period. There has been a rapid increase in the occurrence of natural disasters, with the equivalent of one quarter of the fatalities recorded in the decade between 2001-2010 taking place in a 15 month period in 2010/2011.  

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21 Analysis of Disaster Risk Management in Colombia: A contribution to the Creation of Public Policies, World Bank Colombia, 2011

22 Analysis of Disaster Risk Management in Colombia: A contribution to the Creation of Public Policies, World Bank Colombia, 2011
Despite the increase in occurrence, however, emergency response and management varies according to disaster type and tends to lack planning. Financing for emergency response operates more or less on demand and there are no standard procedures for assessing damage, leading to an imbalance in resource allocation. It is difficult for the State to estimate long-term future funding needs for disaster response due to a lack of information and a lack of clarity in terms of its responsibilities. Most government funding for disaster risk management is allocated at a national level through the General Budget. Between 1998 and 2010 this amounted to US$3.5 billion, or 0.15% of GDP.

**Figure 9: Funding to priority areas of State investment in risk management**

![Figure 9: Funding to priority areas of State investment in risk management](image)

Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank and Colombian Government data

**Civil society response**

Civil society has played a fundamental role in the advancement of IDPs’ rights in Colombia. Displacement and human rights organisations have been responsible for bringing many of the claims made on behalf of IDPs before the courts, which have resulted in positive constitutional action being taken to improve the situation for the displaced population. National NGOs have also worked hard to promote the cause at an international level, bringing petitions and requests for support to international organisations, such as the Inter-American Human Rights System, and simultaneously ensuring that international attention remains focused on the humanitarian situation in Colombia.

There is a strong history of coordinated action between Colombian NGOs, with over 100 NGOs working together in 2008 to draft a submission for the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review of Colombia.

**International response**

The UN has a strong presence in Colombia, with UN OCHA, UNHCR, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Word Food Programme (WFP) and UN-HABITAT all running offices or programmes there. The presence of international humanitarian agencies in the country, although limited, complements the Government’s relief response.
The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Colombia is made up of 11 UN agencies and 17 international NGOs, with the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) all participating as observers. Seven clusters have been established nationally, with the HCT guiding the work of nine Local Humanitarian Teams (LHT) in those regions that are most affected by armed conflict and natural disasters.

Of the seven clusters protection is led by UNHCR with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) as co-leader; food security and nutrition are led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); early recovery is led by UNDP and co-led by Mercy Corps; health is led by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); education in emergencies is led by UNICEF and co-led by NRC; water and sanitation is led by UNICEF; and shelter is led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The emphasis of humanitarian assistance through the HCT is on addressing the country’s humanitarian needs, delivering work to complement that of the GoC. The two largest projects are Protection, and Food Security and Nutrition."

The HCT established a Common Humanitarian Framework (CHF) in 2011, which focuses on those people who have been affected by both the conflict and by natural disaster, particularly in remote border areas and areas of the country that are difficult to reach. Priority is given to remote, rural and semi-urban areas with little or no presence of national institutions, where the most affected groups, such as indigenous people, afro-descendant communities, women and children, have become victims of displacement, forced recruitment, landmines, sexual violence and containment resulting from the conflict.

UN OCHA established an office in Bogotá in 2004. OCHA Colombia works with the GoC to support and coordinate the response to the IDP crisis, providing assistance and protection in areas that are currently out of reach of government agencies and promoting respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. The presence of international humanitarian agencies in the country, although limited, complements the Government’s relief response. The HCT works in accordance with the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence, and is particularly relevant in areas where access is limited. However, UN and partner humanitarian programs remain largely under-funded and therefore lack the capacity to adequately address needs arising from both the conflict and natural disasters.

While there is a high level of cooperation between the UN’s humanitarian community and the Colombian national authorities, UN agencies tend to work more with local actors such as local authorities and Catholic organisations than in partnership with international NGOs, which have been criticised for being “too expensive” to use as implementing agencies for UN programmes in Colombia. Yet despite this, a relatively large proportion of humanitarian funding to Colombia from multilateral donors is channelled through NGOs due to a desire to balance out government and UN interventions with more politically independent actors (see Figure 19).

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23 Humanitarian Outcomes, “Independent Review of the Value Added of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in Colombia”
Emergency humanitarian aid to IDPs who are victims of mass displacement (under Colombian law, mass displacement is defined as the displacement of more than ten families at once) is provided by the GoC in partnership with the ICRC, working alongside various other international agencies such as the World Food Programme. The IOM is currently being funded by USAID to work with the Colombian Government to strengthen the capacity of mayors, governors and other local authorities, as well as the Ministry of Health, the Victims’ Unit, the Centre for Historical Memory and the Office of the Ombudsman, to provide assistance to victims.24

The HCT works in accordance with the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence, and is particularly relevant in areas where access is limited. According to UN OCHA Colombia, in 2012 the HCT assisted 842,466 people. Among these, 139,981 were assisted through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and 17,000 through the Early Response Fund (ERF). However, UN and partner humanitarian programs remain largely under-funded and therefore lack the capacity to adequately address needs arising from both the conflict and natural disasters.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been working in Colombia since 1969.

Colombia and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) seeks to improve the transparency of information and data about aid in order to increase its effectiveness in tackling poverty. A multi-stakeholder initiative of donors, aid-receiving governments and civil society, IATI members have agreed a standard for publishing open data on aid projects, which is now used by over 100 organisations.

The Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia) is one of 22 governments departments worldwide who have endorsed IATI, stating their commitment to the principles of transparency. Although APC-Colombia already has a number of systems in place to capture and publish information from their international cooperation partners, they still require more detailed information on sub-national geographic locations and intended beneficiaries to ensure resources are directed to areas of greatest need. Information is shared publicly online, through a Map of International Cooperation.

International aid

Official development assistance

Official development assistance (ODA) to Colombia has increased from US$269 million in 2000 to over US$1 billion in 2011, also exceeding US$1 billion in 2006 and 2009. The peaks in 2003 and 2006 coincide with large one-off increases in funding from the United States (US) for narcotics control.

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Colombia receives the second highest levels of ODA in Latin America and the Caribbean after Haiti. As a proportion of gross national income (GNI), its ODA is higher than both the regional average and the upper-middle-income country average.

Figure 11: Net official development assistance (ODA) as % of GNI

Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank data
Since 2002 the US have consistently been the largest donor to Colombia by far, giving a total of US$5.5 billion in ODA over the ten-year period.

In the ten years between 2002 and 2011, US aid to Colombia made up 62% of all Colombian ODA, and 64% of all US ODA in this period was for narcotics control (see US counter-narcotics funding, below).
In 2011, following the passing of Colombia’s Victims’ Law, US funding focus shifted to support legal and judicial developments, having made extensive progress in the battle against the illegal narcotics trade in previous years.

**Sector funding**

In the last five years, most of Colombia’s ODA has been spent on ‘other country programmable aid’ (US$3.3 billion).[^25] Humanitarian aid made up 9% of ODA between 2007 and 2011 (US$434 million), peaking at US$106.9 million in 2007, of which US$90.9 million was for emergency/distress relief.

[^25]: “Country programmable aid” is a term developed by the OECD DAC to identify the sub-set of ODA which is transferred to recipient countries and excludes flows which are not received at recipient country level and which are considered unpredictable, including humanitarian aid. We have grouped CPA into aid for public service provision (including funds for health, education, water and sanitation, reproductive health); governance, peace and security; and other. Debt relief is not included here under non-country programmable aid but would be included in the OECD DAC definition.
Within ‘sector allocable aid’, the ‘social infrastructure and services’ subsector received by far the largest share of funds between 2007 and 2011, at 73% (US$3 billion), peaking at US$709 million in 2008. Approximately 26% of all ODA to Colombia in this period was for narcotics control (US$1.185 billion), 99.95% of which was from the US. 9.3% or US$432 million was for legal and judicial development, of which US$390 million (90%) was from the US.
Figure 17: Colombian ODA by sector

1) Types of aid
- Sector allocable: 90%
- Humanitarian aid: 9%
- Other: 1%

2) Sector allocable aid
- Social infrastructure & services: 73%
- Production sectors: 14%
- Economic infrastructure & services: 6%
- Multi-sector / cross-cutting: 7%

3) Social infrastructure and services
- Other social infrastructure & services: 46%
- Government & civil society: 39%
- Health: 2%
- Other: 3%

4a) Other social infrastructure and services
- Narcotics control: 84%
- Social/welfare services: 11%
- Other: 5%

4b) Government and civil society
- Other: 25%
- Legal and judicial development: 37%
- Human rights: 14%
- Democratic participation and civil society: 9%
- Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution: 15%
Humanitarian aid

Humanitarian aid to Colombia more than doubled from US$45 million in 2004 to US$95 million in 2005 in response to devastating floods that affected over 600,000 people. Since a peak of US$110 million in 2007, humanitarian aid has fallen once again, though at $59 million in 2011 it remains higher than it was before the floods. Part of the reason for the recent decline appears to be a shift in the channelling and reporting of funding from the US. Colombia ranked 22\textsuperscript{nd} in the world as a recipient of humanitarian aid from 2002–2011.

Figure 18: International humanitarian aid to Colombia, 1995–2011, US$ millions

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC, UN OCHA and CERF data. The international humanitarian aid calculation combines funding from DAC donors, non-DAC donors, private contributions and imputed CERF calculations.

The US was the largest humanitarian aid donor to Colombia between 2001 and 2010, giving a total of US$219.8 million, followed by the EU at US$203.4 million. Between them, these two donors gave half of the total humanitarian aid received by Colombia in this period.

Figure 19: Top ten donors of humanitarian assistance to Colombia, 2001 – 2010 (US$ millions)

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC, UN OCHA and CERF data
Figure 20: Top ten donors of international humanitarian aid to Colombia, 2006–2010, US$ (millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>EU Institutions</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>EU Institutions</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>EU Institutions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC, UN OCHA FTS and UN CERF

The GoC is focused on improving Colombia’s international image and, as such, until recently was reluctant to acknowledge either the ongoing state of internal conflict or the need for external assistance for humanitarian response. It has refused both a UN consolidated appeals process (CAP) in response to conflict-related issues and a Flash Appeal for flood-related issues and natural disasters. Humanitarian funding to Colombia therefore makes up a relatively low proportion of its ODA, representing 9.2% of all ODA between 2007-2011, despite the huge numbers of IDPs and people in need of humanitarian assistance.

It should be emphasised however, that since 2010 the Government has vastly improved the resources it provides to meet the needs of victims, despite operational constraints in terms of resources and accessibility.

Colombia was the 23rd largest recipient (of 87) of funding from the UN’s CERF between 2006 and 2012, receiving 1.13% of total CERF funds allocated (US$31.5 million). In 2011 it was the 20th largest recipient, with US$5.9 million or 1.4% of total funding. OCHA Colombia hosts a relatively small ERF, which held approximately US$1.5 million in 2011. The ERF is designed to fill gaps in response and acts at a local level, using community contributions where possible to top up the fund’s capacity. A national Humanitarian Situation Risk Index (HSRI) is used to identify key geographical areas for intervention.

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26 Humanitarian Outcomes, “Independent Review of the Value Added of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in Colombia”
UN OCHA and the Universidad Santo Tomás in Colombia began working together in 2006 to create a country-level humanitarian risk index to assist decision makers in rationalising a wide range of complex information, in a context where access to affected areas is often restricted, to better prioritise and coordinate humanitarian response.

Colombia is a relatively data-rich country, with information on economic and social conditions collected by the government. The index combines this information from municipality level with information on conflict and response capacity to assess vulnerability and threat, as well as the likely impact of crises.

As with other composite risk indices – for example, the EC Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) Global Needs Assessment Index and OCHA’s Global Focus model – the HSRI cannot provide real-time information on the evolution of crises or provide numbers of affected people for response planning purposes, and so must be complemented by up-to-date situation analysis from people on the ground. However, the HSRI has proved valuable in achieving consensus on priority areas for early action and resource allocation, and is a core tool used in allocating funding within the Colombia Emergency Response Fund and the country’s Common Humanitarian Framework to select beneficiaries.

The HSRI has proved extremely successful in predicting likely mass displacement and indicating where the greatest number of affected people is likely to be. Following a survey of available methodologies, the Government of Colombia opted to build upon HSRI to create a victimisation risk index, with the goal of estimating areas with risk differentiated by type of harm suffered. This tool was designed to inform government restitution processes under the 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Law, and will include the construction of an information system designed to systematise the process of calculating the index and producing online maps.

Source: www.colombiassh.org/irsh

As the GoC has restricted the use of UN CAP and Flash appeals, there is little data available on beneficiary figures in order to analyse per capita humanitarian funding to Colombia in comparison with other recipient countries of humanitarian aid.

Humanitarian needs in Colombia fall largely into two main categories: those primarily related to conflict, and those resulting from natural disasters. Each has a distinct set of political sensitivities and separate national response systems, which can lead to conflict in the delivery of international humanitarian assistance, with the international humanitarian system attempting to enable an autonomous response based on the fundamental humanitarian principles, while simultaneously allowing the government – which is implicated in the conflict – to take a leading role in activities.  

Between 2007 and 2011 the majority of ODA was channelled through the public sector (52%), whereas the largest share of humanitarian aid (49%) was channelled through NGOs and civil society. In the same period 17% of ODA was channelled through NGOs and civil society, while only 8% of humanitarian aid was channelled through the public sector. Multilateral institutions received 11% of ODA and 36% of humanitarian aid (the second largest share after NGOs and civil society). As a proportion of the total amounts, over six times as much ODA went through the public sector than humanitarian aid, while almost three times as much humanitarian aid when through NGOs than that of ODA.

**US counter-narcotics funding**

Of the US$3.5 billion funding to Colombia for narcotics control between 2002–2011, US$3.497 billion of it, or 99.97%, was from the US, representing 39.9% of all Colombian ODA in that period.
The majority of the US’ non-narcotics military funding to Colombia comes under their “Foreign Military Financing Program [Department of Defence Implemented Military Activities]”.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
As one of the largest humanitarian agencies acting in Colombia, the ICRC has spent US$183.5 million on its humanitarian activities there since 2006.

Other resources
Remittances
Between 1998 and 2003, remittance flows into Colombia increased by over four times, from US$1.5 billion to US$6.8 billion. However, they have since dropped back down to US$3.9 billion, though they remain high compared to other countries in the region and in Colombia’s global income bracket.
Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Colombia and Latin America and the Caribbean has steadily grown over the past two decades, though slightly more erratically in Colombia than across the rest of the region due to the conflict. FDIs in Colombia rose from US$1.3 billion in 1990 to US$12.3 billion in 2011, peaking at US$16 billion in 2005. The peak in 2005 is largely due to the (78.1%) acquisition of Colombia’s largest brewery, Bavaria, by the UK company SAB Miller.\(^{30}\) This is compared to an increase from US$661 million to US$5.5 billion across the wider region in the same period.

Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook

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The global financial crisis contributed to a 30% decrease in Colombia’s FDI flows in 2009 to US$8.6 billion, followed by another 20% drop in 2010 to US$6.9 billion. However, in 2011 FDIs in Colombia were up again at US$12.3 billion, representing around 1.2% of the country’s GDP. In recent years the GoC has begun making efforts to diversify the sectoral distribution of FDI, as it remains concentrated in the extractive industries – 38% of FDI in 2011 went to oil and petroleum, and 20% to mining and quarrying, with 17% of the remaining FDI invested in commercial establishments and only 4% in manufacturing activities.  

**Summary and recommendations**

The Colombian economy has shown impressive growth over the past two decades despite high levels of social and political unrest, with GDP increasing eight-fold from US$41 billion in 1991 to US$332 billion in 2011. In recent years, Colombia has also attracted higher levels of FDI than both the regional average and the upper-middle-income country average – albeit at somewhat erratic year-on-year levels. Although the peace talks currently taking place in Cuba between the GoC and the FARC are delicate and ongoing, the fact that they are taking place at all is a positive sign of improved political and social stability, which can only serve to improve the country’s prospects for international investment.

Sustained international pressure and strong, coordinated lobbying efforts by national and international NGOs have helped lead to vastly increased recognition of and improved support for the millions of IDPs and victims of the Colombian conflict. However, there is still progress to be made – IDP registration and recipient figures of Government support remain patchy at best. It is imperative that the GoC follows through on the commitment it has made to fully and comprehensively support the rights of victims through the passing of the Victims and Land Restitution Bill. This must result in support reaching those who most need it and in the restitution of land or financial resources to all those who lost assets as a result of the conflict.

While it is important to recognise Colombia’s progress in responding to the needs of its IDPs – as previously stated, Colombia is widely considered to have one of the most comprehensive legal structures in the world for addressing the rights of IDPs – there are still areas that could be improved upon. The government should build on recent efforts to reduce the under-registration of IDPs filing for support by better addressing the underlying issues preventing them from coming forward. These include:

- fear of being identified by the guerrilla and/or paramilitary groups involved in their displacement
- inability to access services, due to these being located primarily in cities and urban areas.

Colombia has made good progress over the last ten years in terms of poverty reduction, with the proportion of people living in absolute poverty being reduced by more than half between 2002 and 2008. However, over 15% of people are still living on less than US$2/day and there is still progress to be made. The Government’s adoption of the OPHI’s multidimensional poverty indicators to inform
the national poverty reduction plan shows a commitment to addressing the broader social and health-related aspects of poverty, but inequality remains high and this needs to be addressed.

The Government’s commitment to aid transparency through its involvement with IATI is to be commended. However, this must translate into fully transparent processes concerning all financial flows, both public and private, in order to enable more effective targeting of resources and to make key players accountable to the commitments and investments they have made.
## Annex 1

Dimensions, indicators and targets of Colombia’s multidimensional poverty reduction strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPI dimension (weight in brackets)</th>
<th>MPI variable (weight in brackets)</th>
<th>MPI indicator</th>
<th>Indicator National Development Plan</th>
<th>Baseline NDP 2008 (%)</th>
<th>Data for 2010 (%)</th>
<th>Goal NDP 2014 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education conditions (for households) (0.2)</td>
<td>Educational achievement (0.1)</td>
<td>Average education level for people 15 and older living in a household.</td>
<td>Low educational achievement at the household level</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood and youth conditions (0.2)</td>
<td>Literacy (0.1)</td>
<td>Percentage of people living in a household 15 and older who can read and write.</td>
<td>Illiteracy rate for population 15 and older</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to child care services (0.05)</td>
<td>School attendance</td>
<td>Percentage of children between the ages of 6 and 16 that attend school.</td>
<td>Non-assistance rate for population from 6 to 16.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ‘school lag’ (children older than the average age in a given school year) (0.05)</td>
<td>No ‘school lag’ (children older than the average age in a given school year) (0.05)</td>
<td>Percentage of children and youths (7-17 years old) within the household not subject to school lag (according to the national norm)</td>
<td>School lag for population from 7 to 17.</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to child care services (0.05)</td>
<td>Access to child care services</td>
<td>Percentage of children between the ages of 0 and 5 who simultaneously have access to health, nutrition and education.</td>
<td>Barrier to access of child care services</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children not working (0.05)</td>
<td>Children not working (0.05)</td>
<td>Percentage of children not working (i.e. subject to child labour).</td>
<td>Child work for children from 12 to 17 years old</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment (0.2)</td>
<td>No one in long-term unemployment (0.1)</td>
<td>Percentage of household members from the economically active population (EAP) who don’t face long-term unemployment (more than 12 months).</td>
<td>Long term unemployment rate</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<td>Venezuela</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formal employment (0.1)</strong></td>
<td>Percentage of household members from the economically active population (EAP) employed and affiliated to a pension fund (this indicator is used as a proxy for whether people are formally or informally employed)</td>
<td>Informality rate</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health (0.2)</strong></td>
<td>Percentage of household members over the age of 5 that are insured by the Social Security Health System</td>
<td>No health insurance</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to health services (0.1)</strong></td>
<td>Percentage of people within the household that have access to a health institution in case of need</td>
<td>Access barriers to health services</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to public utilities and housing conditions (0.2)</strong></td>
<td>Urban household: considered deprived if lacking public water system. Rural household: considered deprived when the water used for the preparation of food is obtained from wells, rainwater, spring source, water tank, water carrier or other sources.</td>
<td>Low coverage of pipe water</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adequate elimination of sewer waste (0.04)</strong></td>
<td>Urban household: considered deprived if lacking public sewer system. Rural household: considered deprived if uses a toilet without a sewer connection, a latrine or simply does not have a sewage system.</td>
<td>Low coverage of sewer waste</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
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<td><strong>Adequate floors (0.04)</strong></td>
<td>Lacking materials (dirt floors)</td>
<td>Inadequate floors</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<td>Adequate external walls (0.04)</td>
<td>Inadequate walls</td>
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<tr>
<td>An urban household is considered deprived when the exterior walls are built of untreated wood, boards, planks, guadua or other vegetable, zinc, cloth, cardboard, waste material or when no exterior walls exist. A rural household is considered deprived when exterior walls are built of guadua or another vegetable, zinc, cloth, cardboard, waste materials or if no exterior walls exist.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1 3.0 2.1</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Acknowledgements
With thanks to Jeffrey Villaveces and the rest of the team at UN OCHA Colombia, and to Andrea Delgado for background research.

About us
Global Humanitarian Assistance is a Development Initiatives programme that receives grant funding from the governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom for its ongoing analysis of aid flows to people living in humanitarian crises. It works to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of humanitarian response by further increasing access to reliable, transparent and understandable data on humanitarian assistance.

In addition to the role we play in collating, analysing and communicating ‘humanitarian’ flows reported in the official aid statistics reported to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS), our work allows us to provide insight and assistance on aid architecture and financing mechanisms; fragile states, human security and vulnerability; transparency and accountability.

Development Initiatives is an independent organisation that sees improving aid effectiveness as part of its commitment to the elimination of absolute poverty by 2025.