



**development  
initiatives**

Global Humanitarian  
Assistance



**global  
humanitarian  
assistance  
report 2017**  
executive summary

# executive summary

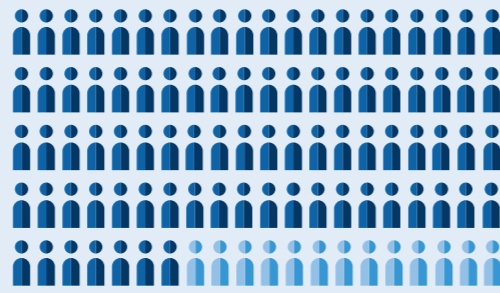
---

---

---

# humanitarian assistance in numbers

## Poverty and crisis risk



**87%**

of people in extreme poverty live in countries that are environmentally vulnerable or fragile or both

## Recipient countries, 2015

(largest volumes)

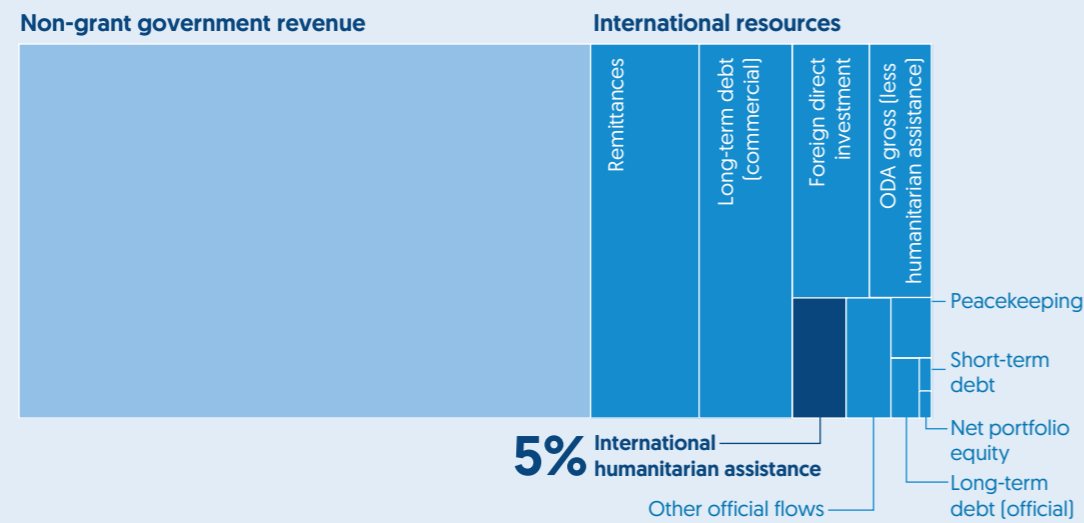


## Donors, 2016\*\*

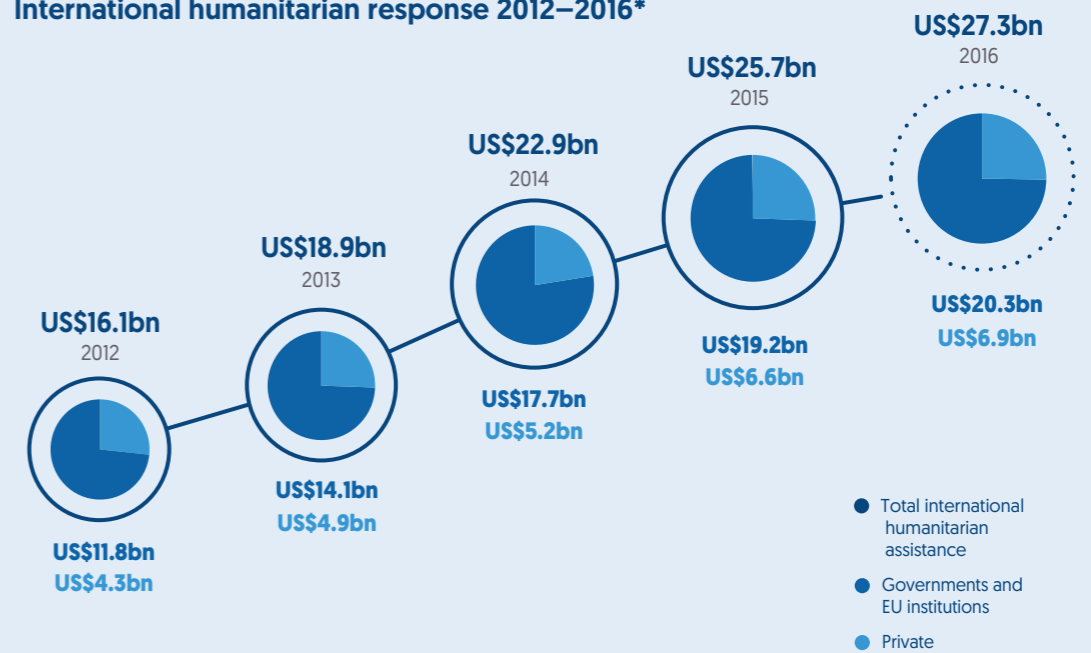
(largest volumes)



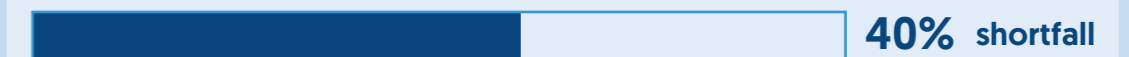
## Resource mix in the 20 countries receiving the most international humanitarian assistance, 2015



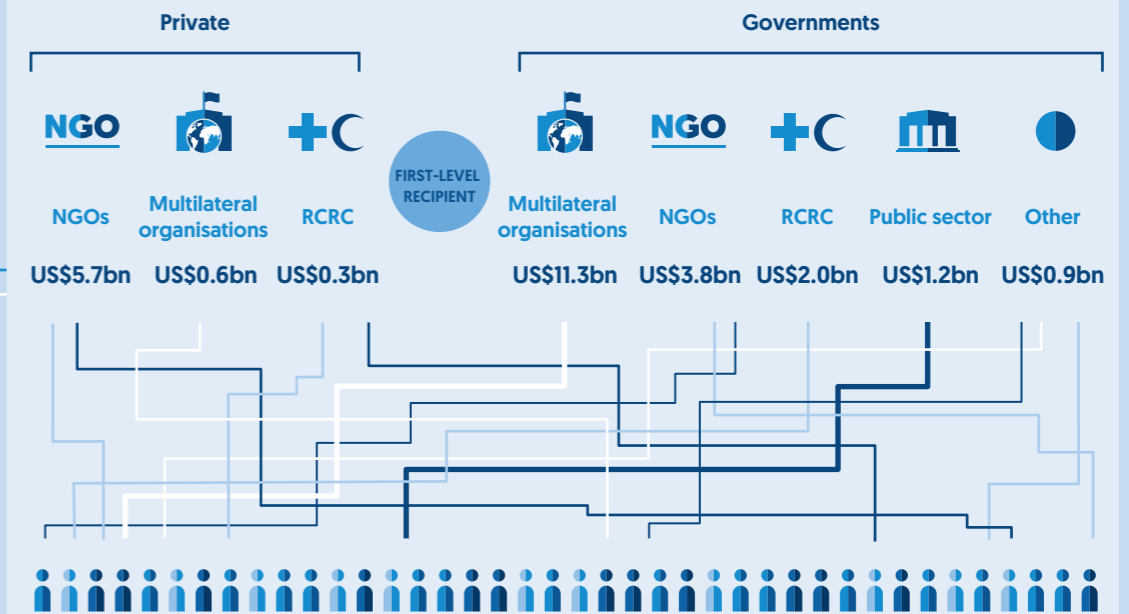
## International humanitarian response 2012–2016\*



## UN-coordinated appeals 2016, proportion of requirements met and unmet



## Funding channels of international humanitarian assistance, 2015



For sources and full notes see Figures 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, 3.1, 4.1 and 5.1.

Notes: \*Data consists only of humanitarian assistance directed internationally by donors. \*\*Contributions of EU member states include an imputed amount of the EU institutions' expenditure. EU institutions are also included separately for comparison and are shaded differently to distinguish from government donors.

Turkey is shaded differently because the humanitarian assistance it voluntarily reports to the DAC is largely comprised of expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees within Turkey so is not strictly comparable with the international humanitarian assistance totals from other donors in this figure. Data for 2016 is preliminary.

## executive summary

Ongoing and new crises left an estimated 164.2 million people in 47 countries in need of international humanitarian assistance in 2016. Over a quarter of people in need were in just three countries – Yemen, Syria and Iraq. Most countries requiring international assistance were affected by multiple crisis types – with many conflict-affected countries also hosting refugees and experiencing disasters associated with natural hazards. The number of people forced into displacement by conflict or violence reached 65.6 million by the end of 2016, the highest recorded total to date. Nearly two-thirds of these people were internally displaced.

Poverty, vulnerability and crisis are clearly linked. At the latest count, an estimated 87% of those living in extreme poverty – at least 661 million people – were in countries affected by fragility, environmental vulnerability or both. Yet the real number, including people in vulnerable countries where poverty data is missing, is likely to be much higher. While global levels of extreme poverty fell, the proportion of extremely poor people in high-risk settings increased since the previous count, prompting fresh commitments for joined-up humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches.

In response to complex needs, a varied landscape of financing mechanisms is emerging. Domestic revenues are critical for preventing, responding to and rebuilding after crises, as are other international resources beyond humanitarian and development assistance. Funding instruments and investments – from contingency financing to concessional loans – offer potential as part of a comprehensive approach to reduce the risks and impacts of crises and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, but are not fully active nor appropriate everywhere.

While small in volume compared with other resource flows, international humanitarian assistance fulfils a specific and vital function for people affected by crises. In 2016, the estimated global total increased for the fourth year running, reaching a new high of US\$27.3 billion. However, the 6% rise from 2015 was significantly lower than increases in recent years, indicating a slowdown in the pace of growth.

The amount of funding going to UN-coordinated appeals rose by 12% in 2016, still leaving a 40% global shortfall. This was felt unevenly across the 43 appeals, with a 95-percentage-point gap between funding levels to the best- and worst-funded appeals.

Most international humanitarian assistance continues to come from a small number of donors. Five government donors together contributed almost two-thirds (65%) of the total in 2016, and one donor (the United States) provided almost a third (31%). While combined contributions from European donors rose by 25%, those from donors in the Middle East and North of Sahara fell by 24%.

As funding from some government donors slowed and shortfalls persisted, the potential of private sources of funding continued to draw attention. However, funding from private donors – individuals, trusts and foundations, and companies – only increased by an estimated 6% in 2016, following a 26% rise in the previous year.

Multilateral development banks are increasingly prominent providers of crisis-related financing. Funding which falls under the humanitarian assistance category<sup>1</sup> is just one of their many wider investments spanning risk reduction to reconstruction, but this alone increased by 65% in 2015 – reaching US\$994 million – and may be set to increase again after recent commitments.

International humanitarian assistance went to 145 countries in 2015 according to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS), though, consistent with previous years, much of it (nearly 60%) went to just 10 countries. For the fourth year running Syria was the single largest recipient in 2015 – receiving 12.5% of country-allocable assistance. UN OCHA FTS data for 2016 shows that more than half (54%) of all crisis-specific humanitarian assistance was concentrated to five crises – Syria, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan and Ethiopia, all severe crises with some of the largest populations in need.

An estimated 88% of official humanitarian assistance went to medium- or long-term recipients in 2015. Moreover, of the 20 largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance in 2015, 18 were medium- or long-term recipients facing recurrent or protracted crises. The importance of timely and predictable funding for saving lives, livelihoods and costs is widely accepted. Still there is not yet significant evidence of a major shift towards multi-year humanitarian financing; nor, despite some good practice, is there systematic provision of early financing to mitigate the most severe impacts of recurrent and predictable disasters.

Flexibility of financing is key to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance – a central objective of the Grand Bargain process following the World Humanitarian Summit. Funding channelled through UN-managed pooled funds almost doubled over the past decade, reaching US\$1.2 billion in 2016. Meanwhile the proportion of unearmarked funding to UN agencies has decreased since 2011, accounting for around 14% of the total amount received by eight UN organisations in 2016. Investments in cash-based programming – providing greater choice for recipients and generating potential efficiency gains – amounted to approximately US\$2.0 billion in 2015.

How funding is channelled to people affected by crises matters and better traceability can support improvements in the way it gets there. Almost half (46%) of international humanitarian assistance in 2015 was directed to multilateral organisations in the first instance. Despite commitments to reinforce local and national capacities, data reported to FTS shows that only 2% of international humanitarian assistance in 2016 went directly to local and national responders, and national and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) received just 0.3% directly. Ongoing efforts aim to ascertain the volume of funds that they accessed indirectly as recipients of funding from international organisations.

Underpinning all commitments to improve crisis financing is the call for increased transparency and better data. Grand Bargain signatories have committed to publish quality data on humanitarian funding, using the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) as the basis for a common standard. Beyond this, other initiatives on data sharing, data literacy and joined-up data have the potential to improve our understanding of who is in need where, and what resources can be best targeted to support them.

# foreword

---

---

---

# what's new?

Welcome to the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*

In 2016, major conflicts such as in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and South Sudan continued and even escalated, leaving tens of millions of people displaced and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile the effects of the El Niño and La Niña weather phenomena hit many others. People also continued to suffer due to less high-profile emergencies in countries such as Myanmar, Colombia and Mali.

Yet this year and last have also generated new momentum for change. One year on from the World Humanitarian Summit, the energy that brought people together around the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity is still palpable.<sup>1</sup> Multiple processes – including the Grand Bargain,<sup>2</sup> the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants,<sup>3</sup> World Bank meetings and discussions around the 'New Way of Working'<sup>4</sup> – have catalysed efforts to define, implement and measure new ways to address and prevent crises.

This year's Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) report should be read against this backdrop. Development Initiatives has been producing the GHA report as a global resource for policymakers and practitioners every year since 2000. While much has changed during this time, the demand for independent and objective analysis on poverty, crises and relevant financial resources remains as strong as ever.

The *GHA Report 2017* provides a comprehensive overview of humanitarian-related funding. In addition to our annual analysis, this year's report introduces new topics to support the reform of financing for crises. For example, our analysis on the links between poverty and crisis, risks and resources contributes to efforts to bridge the humanitarian–development divide and ultimately achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, our independent analysis across several of the Grand Bargain commitment areas – such as transparency, localisation, earmarking, cash and multi-year funding – supports official processes established to monitor progress and sustain momentum.

In bringing this evidence base together, the report also reveals some major data gaps. These include the availability of good quality data on the poorest and most crisis-vulnerable people; a transparent overview of all relevant resources going to people affected by crises, including domestic expenditure; and critically, an understanding of how funding reaches people in need. Filling these data gaps would facilitate better identification of those most in need, and ensure that they have access to the right resources at the right time and in the right way.

It is clear that much more work is needed to build a transparent and comprehensive evidence base to inform the best possible responses. The *GHA Report 2017* is one important part of that collective effort. As ever, we welcome your feedback so we can continue to provide better data and analysis on crisis-affected people, and the resources that can protect, assist and support them.

Thank you for your interest.

Harpinder Collacott, Executive Director

# notes

## executive summary

- 1 As reported to reported to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

## foreword

- 1 UN General Assembly, 2016. *One humanity: shared responsibility*. Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit. Available at: <http://sgreport.worldhumanitariansummit.org>
- 2 The Grand Bargain signatories, 2016. *The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need*. Available at: <http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>
- 3 UN General Assembly, 2016. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*. Available at: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1)
- 4 UN OCHA, 2017. *New Way of Working*. Available at: <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/NWOW%20Booklet%20low%20res.002.pdf>



Who is affected by crises, what funding goes to them and how can the world provide better financing?

Development Initiatives' Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) reports present a clear and comprehensive overview of the complex and changing humanitarian financing landscape, based on independent analysis of the latest data.

This is a summary of the *GHA Report 2017*. The 2017 edition of this annual report includes core data and key trends, as well as new analysis related to Grand Bargain and Sustainable Development Goal commitments.

Visit our website to download and read the full report and other relevant analysis.

To ask questions or provide comments contact us by email ([gha@devinit.org](mailto:gha@devinit.org)). We welcome your feedback.



## Visit

[www.devinit.org](http://www.devinit.org)

[flickr.com/photos/development\\_initiatives](https://www.flickr.com/photos/development_initiatives)

## Follow us on Twitter

 [@devinitorg](https://twitter.com/devinitorg) and [@gha\\_team](https://twitter.com/gha_team)

## Like us on Facebook

 [/Development.Initiatives](https://www.facebook.com/Development.Initiatives)

 [/ghaorg](https://www.facebook.com/ghaorg)

## Email

 [gha@devinit.org](mailto:gha@devinit.org)

## UK

North Quay House  
Quay side, Temple Back  
Bristol, BS1 6FL, UK  
+44 (0) 1179 272 505

## KENYA

Shelter Afrique Building  
4th Floor, Mamlaka Road  
Nairobi, Kenya  
PO Box 102802-00101  
+254 (0) 20 272 5346

## UGANDA

Ggaba Road, Mutesasira  
Zone, Kansanga  
Kampala, Uganda  
PO Box 22459  
+256 (0) 312 – 263629/30  
+256 (0) 414 – 269495  
[www.drt-ug.org](http://www.drt-ug.org)

## US

1110 Vermont Ave NW,  
Suite 500, Washington DC  
20005, USA

Copyright © 2017 Development Initiatives Ltd

We encourage dissemination of our work provided a reference is included.

While the authors have made every effort to ensure that the information in this report is correct at time of publication, Development Initiatives does not assume liability for the accuracy of the data or consequences of its use.

Cover and infographic design by Broadley Creative

Typesetting by Definite.design

Development Initiatives is the trading name of: Development Initiatives Poverty Research Ltd, registered in England and Wales, Company No. 06368740; and DI International Ltd, registered in England and Wales, Company No. 5802543. Registered Office: North Quay House, Quay Side, Temple Back, Bristol, BS1 6FL, UK