

# chapter 3

## donors: who gives assistance?

In 2017, volumes of international humanitarian assistance provided by government donors remained at similar levels to 2016. They also continued to be concentrated among a small group of these donors. In 2017, as in 2016, the three largest donors accounted for almost three-fifths of all government contributions, while the US remained the single largest donor, providing almost a third (32%) of all assistance.

Just over half of the 20 largest donors of international humanitarian assistance increased their contributions in 2017, although only three countries saw growth in excess of US\$100 million. These increases were counterbalanced by reductions among other donors. International humanitarian assistance from countries in the Middle East and North Africa fell significantly for the second consecutive year, decreasing by 30% from 2016. Levels of funding from governments in Europe plateaued in 2017, following a sharp rise in 2016. Contributions from Europe in 2017 accounted for the same proportion of total government funding (53%) as in the previous year.

Estimated funding for international humanitarian assistance from private donors – individuals, trusts, foundations and corporations – grew by approximately 9% in 2017, following a decrease of 14% in 2016. The sharp growth in private contributions in 2015 appears to represent an exceptional spike – interrupting a six-year trend of steady growth – likely driven by the occurrence of high-profile sudden-onset disasters associated with natural hazards including the Nepal earthquake as well as the Ebola virus disease outbreak.

Contributions from trusts and foundations grew by 14% in 2016 [the latest year for which a breakdown by private donor type is available], accounting for an increasing proportion of funding from private donors. Yet individual giving continued to be the single largest source of private international humanitarian assistance, accounting for over two-thirds (68%) of all private contributions.

# International government funding: largest donors

**Figure 3.1**

20 contributors of the largest amounts of humanitarian assistance, governments and EU institutions, 2017



A relatively small group of governments, along with EU institutions, continue to provide the majority of international humanitarian assistance.

- In 2017 international humanitarian assistance from the largest 20 public donors was largely unchanged from the previous year (up to US\$19.8 billion in 2017 from US\$19.5 billion in 2016).
- Contributions from the group of 20 largest donors increased, but the pace of growth slowed to only 1.6% from 2016, following rises in the preceding three years of 8%, 11% and 24%, respectively.
- The proportion of total contributions provided by the three largest donors increased slightly from 57% in 2016 to 59% in 2017.<sup>1</sup>
- The US continued to be the single largest donor, providing almost a third (32%) of all public funding for humanitarian assistance, a similar share to that contributed in 2016 (32%).

**Source:** Development Initiatives based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) data.

**Notes:** UAE: United Arab Emirates; Data for 2017 OECD DAC is preliminary. Contributions of EU member states include an imputed amount of their expenditure (see our online *Methodology and definitions*). EU institutions are also included separately for comparison and are shaded differently. Turkey is shaded differently because the humanitarian assistance it voluntarily reports to the DAC<sup>2</sup> is largely comprised of expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees in Turkey,<sup>3</sup> and is not therefore strictly comparable with the international humanitarian assistance from other donors in this figure. Data is in constant 2016 prices.

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Some notable year-on-year increases and decreases in the volumes of international humanitarian assistance provided by individual governments are evident.

- 10 of the 20 largest donors in 2016 increased their contributions in 2017, with six increasing by more than 10%.
- Among the very largest donors, increases in excess of US\$100 million were seen from the US, of US\$3.5 billion (5%); Germany, of US\$284 million (11%); and Canada, of US\$111 million (19%).
- These increases were largely counterbalanced by reductions in funding from another 10 of the largest donors, with four decreasing by more than 10%.
- The single most significant fall in contributions was from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), of US\$434 million (61%), the only country to reduce funding by more than US\$100 million.

According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) guidance, donors can report some of their spending on hosting refugees for their first year as non-humanitarian official development assistance (ODA).<sup>4</sup>

- In 2017, total reported costs decreased for the first year since 2012, falling by 14% to US\$13.8 billion from 2016 to 2017.
- Of the 15 countries with the highest in-country refugee-hosting costs, 10 reported decreases.
- Costs for 2017 were, however, still three times the level reported in 2012.
- In 2017, Germany (43%), Italy (13%) and the US (12%) accounted for two-thirds of expenditure.
- The Netherlands and Spain reported large increases in spending from 2016 to 2017, rising by 87% (to US\$813 million) and 140% (to US\$213 million), respectively.

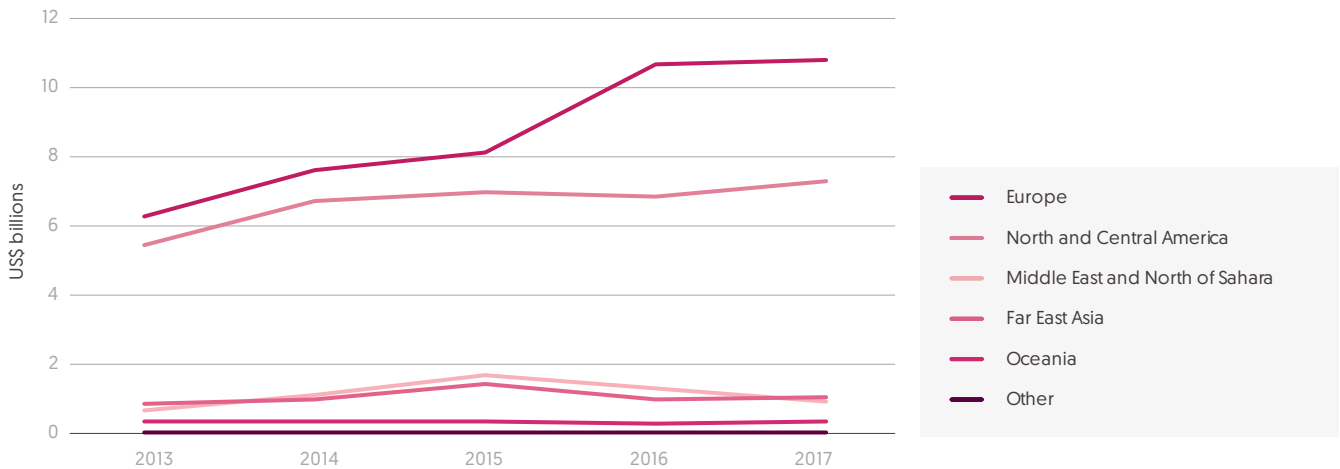
The proportion of gross national income (GNI) spent on international humanitarian assistance indicates the significance of humanitarian spending relative to the size of the economy and other spending priorities.

- In 2017, significant changes in the share of GNI dedicated to humanitarian assistance from 2016 were evident for Turkey, increasing from 0.69% to 0.85%, and the UAE, decreasing from 0.20% to 0.08%.
- In addition to Turkey, five other countries contributed more than 0.1% of GNI as international humanitarian assistance: Norway (0.17%); Luxembourg (0.17%); Denmark (0.16%); Kuwait (0.16%); and Sweden (0.15%).
- The US was the largest donor by volume but contributed only 0.04% of GNI as international humanitarian assistance, the 19th largest share of GNI.

# International government funding: donor regions

**Figure 3.2**

International humanitarian assistance from governments by donor region, 2013–2017



In 2017, volumes of international humanitarian assistance from different regions showed only minor changes from 2016.

- In 2017, contributions from European governments (provided bilaterally and from EU institutions) accounted for just over half of all government funding (53%, US\$10.9 billion), a minor change from the previous year (53%, US\$10.8 billion).
- Levels of assistance provided by countries in North and Central America (primarily the US and Canada) have also remained relatively stable, increasing by 6% in 2017, following a 1% decrease in 2016 and a 3% rise in 2015.
- Funding from both the US and Canada grew in 2017, by US\$304 million and US\$111 million, respectively. This represented a sharp 19% increase in total funding from Canada following a larger, 21% (US\$150 million) fall in 2016.
- Levels of funding from countries in the Middle East and North of Sahara region continued to decline (decreasing by US\$394 million) from their 2015 peak (US\$1.7 billion).
- This decline was primarily driven by a US\$434 million fall in funding from the UAE, while funding from Kuwait also fell (US\$11 million).
- A consistent trend in allocations across the region was not evident, however, as funding from Saudi Arabia and Qatar increased by US\$24 million and US\$28 million respectively.
- Contributions from governments in the Middle East and North of Sahara accounted for 4% of all government funding in 2017, down from 6% in 2016 and 9% in 2015.

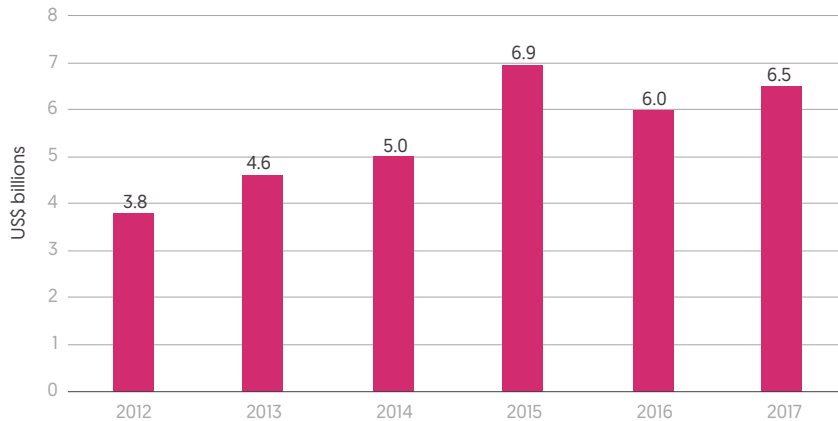
**Source:** Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC, UN CERF and UN OCHA FTS data.

**Notes:** OECD DAC data for 2017 is preliminary. Funding from OECD DAC donors includes contributions from EU institutions. OECD country naming has been used for regions, except the Middle East and North of Sahara, which have been combined. 'Other' regions includes the combined total of regions where funding was below US\$100 million over the five-year period. Calculations only include humanitarian assistance spent internationally, not in-country. See our online *Methodology and definitions*. Data is in constant 2016 prices.

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## Private donors

**Figure 3.3**  
International humanitarian assistance from private donors, 2012–2017



With resources for international humanitarian assistance continually stretched, private donors play a vital and substantial role funding humanitarian action, in addition to public funding from governments.

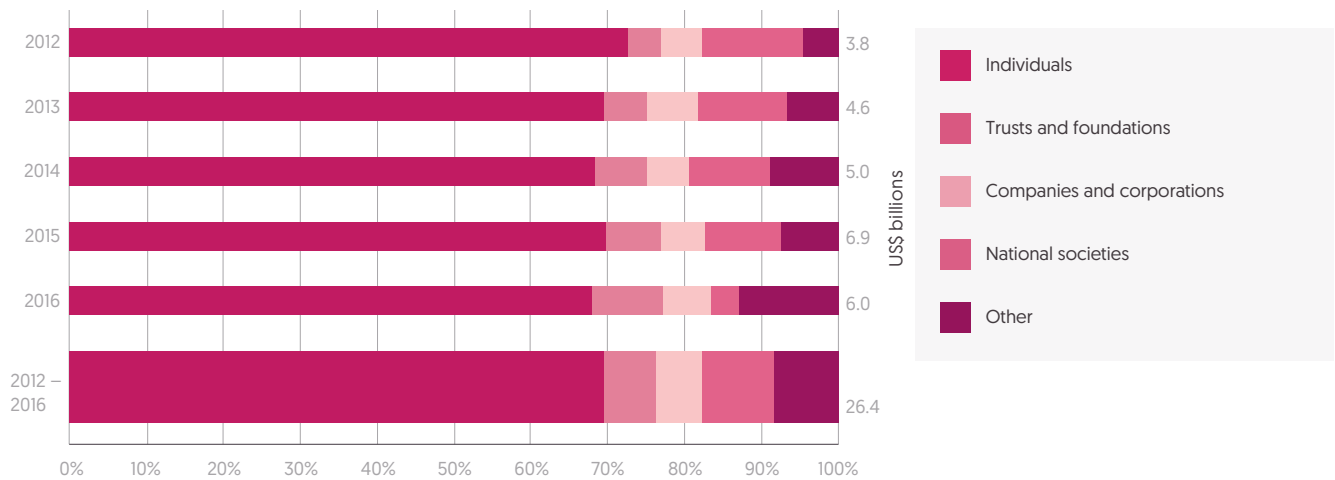
- International humanitarian assistance provided by private donors decreased to US\$6.0 billion in 2016 from US\$6.9 billion in 2015, following four consecutive years of growth from 2012.<sup>5</sup>
- Preliminary estimates for 2017 indicate that private donor contributions rose by 9% from 2016 to US\$6.5 billion.
- Figures for 2017 suggest a return to a pattern of steady growth in contributions from private donors, with an increase of US\$558 million slightly below the average yearly level of growth since 2012 [US\$687 million].
- Funding in 2015 appears to represent an exceptional spike, likely driven by high-profile sudden-onset disasters associated with natural hazards including the Nepal earthquake as well as the Ebola outbreak.
- Although increasing by 72% in volume from 2012, the proportion of all humanitarian assistance provided by private sources has remained relatively constant over the past six years, accounting for about a quarter of all international humanitarian assistance [ranging from 23% to 27% of all funding].
- In 2017 the Syria crisis remained the largest recipient of private contributions.
- Private sources contributed 2% of total humanitarian response to the Syria crisis [down from 4% in 2016], with private funding reducing by 51% [US\$136 million].

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**Source:** Development Initiatives based on our unique dataset of private contributions.

**Notes:** Figures for 2017 are preliminary estimates [see our online *Methodology and definitions* for full details]. Data is in constant 2016 prices.

**Figure 3.4**  
Sources of private international humanitarian assistance, 2012–2016



This figure shows how sources of private international humanitarian assistance have varied between 2012 and 2016.

- Individual giving remained the largest source of private humanitarian assistance in 2016, accounting for two-thirds (68%) of private contributions and totalling US\$4.1 billion.
- The volume and proportion of total private funding provided by trusts and foundations continued to increase in 2016.
- Contributions from trusts and foundations rose to US\$557 million (a 14% increase from 2015) and accounted for 9% of all private humanitarian assistance in 2016.
- According to our dataset (see our online *Methodology and definitions*), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) continued to receive a greater proportion of their funding from private sources than other types of organisation did,<sup>6</sup> with 41% of humanitarian funding raised by NGOs in 2016 coming from private contributions.

**Source:** Development Initiatives based on our unique dataset of private contributions.

**Notes:** Data is in constant 2016 prices.

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## chapter 3

1. Turkey and EU institutions are not included in these calculations. In 2016, the three government donors that contributed 59% of the total (US\$12.1 billion) were the US, Germany and the UK.
2. Other government providers that voluntarily reported to the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System in 2016 were Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Russia, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Turkey and the UAE.
3. In 2017, 98% of Turkey's DAC reported humanitarian assistance was spent on supporting Syrian refugees in Turkey. The proportions of humanitarian expenditure spent on Syrian refugees in Turkey appear to have remained constant. Figures were not available for 2016, but in 2015 97% of Turkey's reported humanitarian assistance was spent on Syrian refugees in Turkey.
4. Amendments to the OECD DAC guidelines specifying the costs that can be reported as in-country refugee hosting expenditure were agreed in October 2017. In-donor refugee costs are only those reported under the specified ODA category code in these guidelines. Other expenditure on refugee hosting in these countries that is not reported to this code is not included. [see OECD, 2017. *DAC High Level Communiqué*: 31 October 2017. Available at: [www.oecd.org/dac/DAC-HLM-2017-Communique.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/DAC-HLM-2017-Communique.pdf)]. The revised guidelines will apply to expenditure in 2018 that will be reported in 2019. The revisions aim to enhance the consistency of reporting between donors as well as transparency of reported costs. For analysis of guidelines, see Development Initiatives, 2017. *ODA modernisation: An update following the October 2017 HLM*. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ODA-modernisation-an-update-following-the-October-2017-HLM.pdf>. Data is in constant 2016 prices.
5. The calculated value reported for 2016 in this report differs from the estimate provided in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*. Factors influencing differences in reported figures include: changes in the price base; new organisations sharing funding data with Development Initiatives in 2017; additional reporting and upgrade to FTS and consequent impact on the scaling of our independently collected data. For more information see our online *Methodology and definitions*.
6. Organisations are categorised as NGOs, UN agencies or Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.