

Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF) for the Danish Refugee Council's work in Horn of Africa and Yemen

A Humanitarian Accountability Framework is a set of definitions, procedures, and standards that specify how an agency will ensure accountability to its stakeholders. We want our stakeholders, and especially beneficiaries, staff and donors to use this HAF to judge our performance.

"In DRC we wish to be accountable. Not just to our donors and membership, but also – and in particular - to those we try to help. We have many instruments for this, like participation, feedback, complaints-handling and reporting. One important element is informing beneficiaries, disaster survivors and other stakeholders about our Humanitarian Accountability Framework – in other words what they should hold us accountable for."

Accountability is about **taking account** of the views of others, and **accounting for** our decisions and actions.

Accountability can also be defined as **'the responsible use of power.'**

THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL - General Information

Vision

No refugee must be in want of help to find protection and durable solutions

Mission

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a private, independent, non-profit organisation (NGO), devoted, on the basis of humanitarian principles and the Human Rights Declaration, to supporting the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and to promoting long term solutions to the problems of forced migration. DRC works in the context of *conflict-induced displacements of populations* and in return and reintegration situations.

DRC fulfils its mission through:

- Granting direct assistance to conflict-affected populations – refugees, IDPs and host communities in the conflict areas of the world;
- Assisting refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark;
- Speaking the cause of conflict- affected populations internationally and in Denmark.

Organisation

DRC is an umbrella organisation consisting of 31 organisation members broadly representing civil society in Denmark committed to the refugee cause, as well as some 300 voluntary groups. Its head office in Copenhagen comprises of the following departments: Asylum and Repatriation; Integration; Volunteers; Communications; Resources and Development (administration); DRC International (international programs). DRC has program offices in 25 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Affiliations and additional interests

DRC is a member of the following networks:

- International Council of Voluntary Agencies - ICVA
- Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies – VOICE
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles – ECRE
- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (International) - HAP
- Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action - ALNAP
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines – ICBL

DRC has signed general partnership agreements with ECHO and UNHCR and agreements on secondment of personnel with OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, and UNDP.

DRC'S INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS

Mandate for the international activities

The mandate for the international activities is the protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems, on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights, including:

- Providing refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected groups in situations of war and conflict with assistance according to their rights. This assistance can consist of relief and other humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and support to return home, as well as contributions to the promotion of durable solutions.
- Contributing to capacity building and co-operation between local and national authorities, as well as other relevant organizations. This work aims at strengthening advocacy and promoting solutions to problems related to situations of conflict, particularly with a view to improving the protection and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Key instruments, standards and codes that DRC subscribes to globally:

[Conventions and the like:]

- The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees; and
- The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Geneva Convention and protocols of 1949
- Other key bodies of international humanitarian law

[Voluntary NGO codes and the like:]

- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief
 - The SPHERE humanitarian charter and minimum standards in disaster response
 - The HAP Humanitarian Accountability Principles
 - The HAP Principles for Humanitarian Action
 - Code of Conduct of DRC (for DRC and Staff in International Programs)
- [Related to humanitarian removal of explosive remnants of war:]
- The 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention also named the Ottawa Treaty
 - The 1980 Convention on certain Conventional Weapons, including the amended protocol II from 1998 and the protocol V from 2003 addressing Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)
 - IMAS standards (humanitarian mine action)

In the Horn of Africa and Yemen, we subscribe to all the above, but the following are especially pertinent in guiding our operational work and staff behaviour:

- The HAP Standard 2007 (which includes 9 Principles for Humanitarian Action and 6 Benchmarks)
- The SPHERE Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief. (With particular focus on technical standards for a) WatSan and Hygiene, b) Food Aid, c) Shelter and Settlement, d) Non Food Items.
- UNHCR Somalia Cluster guidelines for Shelter and NFI distribution
- Technical specifications from Government of Kenya, for shelter construction in Kenya.
- DRC Staff code of Conduct.

The Danish Refugee Council in Horn of Africa and Yemen

Background

DRC has been present in the Horn of Africa (HoA) since 1998, when a programme was developed in Somaliland, focusing on people affected by conflict related displacement. This focus was based on DRC's global mandate to work with displaced people in conflict areas. Since then, DRC has expanded its services to conflict affected Somalis in other parts of the Somalia region, and also to those Somalis who have entered neighbouring countries as asylum seekers or refugees.

The DRC Horn of Africa regional office was opened in 2006, to provide strategic, management and fundraising support to the DRC programmes working on Somali displacement issues¹. Steady expansion over 4 years has seen the growth and diversification of the DRC portfolio of services:

Geographically: DRC HoA has operations in Somaliland, Puntland, South and Central Somalia, Kenya, Yemen and Ethiopia. A regional protection capacity building initiative is also underway in the Great Lakes Region.

Target Groups: DRC HoA works primarily with displaced Somalis, host communities and other conflict affected people in Somalia and neighbouring countries. A smaller initiative supports displaced Kenyans in the Rift Valley.

Partnerships: DRC has contractual partnerships with over 15 local and international NGOs, as well as International Organisations such as IOM and Red Cross, in Somalia, Kenya and Yemen.

Donors: In 2009, DRC received funds from over 12 donors, with main contributors including Danida, SIDA, NMFA, ECHO, World Bank and UNHCR.

Activities: DRC has a wide portfolio of activities, but with overarching focus on protection, livelihoods and emergencies, thus reflecting the global DRC HAF. Additional specific areas of growth include the Community Driven Recovery and Development (CDRD) approach, conflict resolution and food aid.

Horn of Africa- Programme Objectives

Development Objective:

To strengthen a regional protection framework and work towards durable solutions for displaced Somalis in the Horn of Africa and Yemen

DRC is committed to following a rights' based approach, and will thus work towards the above development objective on the basis of human rights and humanitarian principles.

¹ DRC also has programmes in South Sudan, North Sudan and Uganda, but these have been primarily supported from Copenhagen. DDG has had a Regional Director based in Nairobi since 2007, providing varied support to DDG programmes in HoA. However, this HAF focuses on the DRC HoA Regional Programme, which is primarily focused on Somali displacement issues.

Immediate Objectives:

Following the situation in the Horn of Africa and under inspiration from DRC's General Assistance Framework, DRC's Regional Horn of Africa protection programme has three Immediate Objectives:

1. *Protection of **the right to life** has been strengthened in areas and communities that host Somali refugees/ IDPs in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen.*
2. *Protection of **right to livelihood**, has been strengthened in areas and communities that host Somali refugees/ IDPs in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen*
3. *The **right to protection** has been strengthened in areas and communities that host Somali refugees/ IDPs in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen.*

Rational for objectives:

1. The Right to Life: Our first objective is simply about reducing morbidity and mortality. Staff and resources will be deployed in the selected programme areas and will provide immediate support to IDP and refugee receiving areas. Apart from saving lives and alleviating immediate suffering such response will reduce competition and conflicts over scarce resources in receiving areas. Disaster prevention and preparedness activities will also be conducted where feasible. At the regional level this component will contribute to reduce both primary and secondary displacement to other areas.

2. The Right to Livelihood: Our second objective focuses on strengthening the capacities to host and protect refugees / IDPs in areas and communities that experience high influx, or transit of displaced persons. By providing support and extra resources to cope with the pressure from the increased population the receiving areas and communities will be able to achieve stable livelihoods and self-sufficiency. As the support services follow the IDPs / refugees, they will be seen as an asset rather than a liability to the target areas. The rationale is that strengthening protection capacities in the region will provide better protection, and avoid repeated displacement due to conflict over scarce resources in hosting communities.

3. The Right to Protection: The third complementing component in the strategy towards building up a regional framework for protection of displaced Somalis inside Somalia and in neighbouring countries, addresses duty bearers in these areas. DRC will continue its programme of advocacy and capacity building of duty bearers, but with a focus on actions which have tangible impacts for communities who are already being served by other DRC programmes.

For further information the detailed HoA regional strategic priorities are documented in the HoA Regional Strategic Paper for 2010-2012)

Humanitarian Accountability Baseline and plan of action

In January 2010 we have produced 7 self assessments against the HAP standard. Some are new and some are updates. Each self assessment also provides activities and targets for 2010, which are summarised in the HAF for the specific programme area.

The Regional office has identified several areas, which it will focus on:

Humanitarian Accountability Framework - development and dissemination

- Heads of Office will be asked to adapt regional HAFs to local context by adding 1-2 pages, which has local contact details, brief paragraph of programme background, local office organogram and any additional standards being followed.
- Regional office will initiate translation into local languages- Somali, Amharic and Arabic.
- Heads of office will be asked to disseminate HAFs to all staff and partners, and make available to beneficiaries or their representatives.

- Regional office will incorporate HAF into individual staff inductions, and as group discussions to teams. By April 2010.
- HAF to be reviewed and updated in Annual Review 2011.

HAP Standard Compliance

- All Heads of Programme offices will be required to include a section on HAP Standard progress, in their quarterly reports.
- Regional office² will review progress updates in quarterly reports, and provide guidance and assistance as required.
- Regional office will facilitate training and support for programme offices to develop and implement Complaints Mechanisms for beneficiaries in all programme areas by December 2010.
- Regional Office (Regional Communications Advisor) will facilitate translation of HAP standard (not guide book) into Somali language, in consultation with HAP and a local reference committee.

Accountability Resourcing

- Regional Grants Manager and Heads of Programme will try to incorporate appropriate budget lines in proposals, to facilitate the application and compliance with HAP Standard.

Accountability Advocacy

- DRC Regional Office will continue to support HAP events where possible, and also continue to advocate for humanitarian accountability in all public forums.
- DRC Regional Office (Regional Director) will continue to lobby for greater promotion of accountability within the CAP Somalia.

Humanitarian Quality Management System (QMS) and continuous improvement

A QMS is a designated set of processes that enable continual improvement in an agency's performance in meeting the essential needs and respecting the dignity of disaster survivors. It is essentially the system which allows us to implement, monitor and improve our Humanitarian Accountability Framework (i.e. the entire document you are now reading.)

Policy

DRC has committed to quality and accountability at the highest level. We have a publicly available Global HAF, and localised regional and country level HAFs. The HAFs clearly state our organisational commitments at all levels.

Infrastructure/ Stakeholders

DRC in HoA has numerous stakeholders, who are responsible for the QMS. There is a clear organogram (staff structure), which is annexed to this document. All staff have a role in ensuring accountability, but programme staff have a particular commitment to ensuring compliance with the HAF. Programme staff fall under a clear management line, which leads through 2 senior regional posts- the Regional Director and the Deputy Regional Director. In addition, the DRC HQ has 2 staff (Coordinator and Assistant) dedicated to coordinating and supporting HoA programmes, as well as access to the HQ Accountability Focal Point. All Country/ Programme Managers and the Regional Directors have a clear reference in their Job descriptions, for ensuring humanitarian accountability.

In addition to staff, DRC is committed to soliciting feedback from others to help regularly gauge our performance. Consultations have been held with donors, NGOs and beneficiaries to get feedback on perceptions of DRC. These have fed into a regional strategy.

² Deputy Regional Director is the person responsible, unless otherwise stated.

An important role which we aim to have, should funds permit, is a Quality and Accountability officer, who will provide cross region HAF compliance support.

Awareness

The HoA Regional office is committed to promoting awareness of the HAF, so that others may understand our mission, background and strategy. Also, so that they may judge our performance against the standards we set ourselves. The RO is responsible for ensuring that the HAF is annually updated, made locally specific to each programme unit, translated and disseminated to staff, partners, and beneficiaries in formats and media which are accessible and useful.

Planning and resources

The HoA region has annual re-assessment of its status against the HAF, which is conducted in the preparation for that Annual review.

Annual programme plans are also made during the “annual review process”, and this is when the Regional Strategy is updated. Accountability and quality feature heavily in the review process and for example the 2010-12 Regional Strategy has several clear commitments to improve accountability and quality.

PMs/ CDs and the DRD are responsible for allocating budgetary resources in as many donor proposals as possible. Other materials (including Complaints Handling manuals, HAP Standard handbooks etc) are available from HQ, as is specialist advice on accountability issues.

Implementation

The implementation of accountability plans is the responsibility of all staff, but Programme Managers/ Country Directors have key responsibility to ensure that the HAF is implemented.

Capacity building of staff will be assessed by PMs/ CDs, and allocation of resources, as well as organising of activities is their responsibility, with coordination by Deputy Regional Director.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring the relevance and impact of DRC assistance is a key to continuous learning and improvement. In addition to narrative and financial monitoring and reporting prescribed in the individual project contracts with a donor, DRC maintains an internal planning, reporting and evaluation framework for DRC programs comprising strategic planning, regular internal reporting and an annual internal review. In addition, DRC carries out or commissions external project reviews or evaluations and one or two cross-cutting reviews per year.

Most offices in HoA have a dedicated M&E Officer, with oversight support from PMs/ CDs and DRD.

HoA conducts regular evaluations based on contractual requirements, but also occasionally using internal resources. Review visits are conducted by RO and HQ staff.

The quarterly report in HoA, has a dedicated section on reporting whether the local Accountability Improvement Plan is progressing as scheduled.

Learning

DRC widely disseminates its evaluation and review reports, and does also hold regular internal review sessions for specific programmes. Formalised learning opportunities also include: Annual Review; Annual Portfolio analyses; Annual Programme Managers meetings HoA; Annual Programme meeting Denmark; programme level meetings; formal training of staff in situ, or at external events; regular cross programme visits for staff.

A staff performance management system has been implemented since 2009, and is expected to be fully functioning by end of 2010.

Contact people

DRC Office	Person/ Title	Contact details.
DRC Horn of Africa and Yemen Regional Office	Peter Klansoe, Regional Director	Peter.klansoe@drc.dk +254723111359
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DRC South and Central Somalia	Maja Munk, Programme Manager	Maja.munk@drc.dk +254720706302
DRC Yemen	Santiago Perez Crespo, Country Director	Pm.drcyemen@drc.dk +967734700118
DRC Head Office	Ann Mary Olsen	annmary.olsen@drc.dk +45 33735000

Comments and Complaints

DRC staff must comply with this Humanitarian Accountability Framework. We recognise that it takes resources, skills, practice, continuous motivation and regular innovation to comply with all our commitments. Our working areas and contexts are complex and changing; sometimes we cannot comply with our commitments, but we will always strive to be transparent about this and seek exoneration where necessary.

We welcome any support, suggestions, feedback or complaints from any DRC stakeholders. We wish to be judged against our commitments, as outlined in this HAF document. In particular, we expect to be judged by those people we seek to serve, and those people we work alongside.

Feedback, comments, suggestions and complaints about non-compliance can be submitted as follows:

- **Programme level:** Through the Feedback and Complaints Mechanism of the program in question. If there is no local Feedback and Complaints Mechanism in place, then through the resident DRC Programme Manager or Country Director. (see above for contact details)
- **Regional level:** Through the Regional Director, Peter Klansoe, +254 20 418 0403/ 4/ 5, peter.klansoe@drc.dk
- **DRC International Head Office:** Through the Head of DRC International, Ann Mary Olsen, +45 33735000, annmary.olsen@drc.dk

DRC HoA Regional programme and support set up

