

# Humanitarian Accountability Framework for the Danish Refugee Council's international programming<sup>1</sup>

“In DRC we wish to be accountable. Not just to our donors and membership, but – most importantly, to those we try to assist. We have many instruments in place for this, such as participation, feedback, complaints-handling and reporting. An important element is informing our beneficiaries and stakeholders about our Humanitarian Accountability Framework thereby clearly defining what they should hold us accountable for.”

## THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL (DRC) IN GENERAL

### Vision

“No refugee must be in want of help to find protection and durable solutions. And nobody who wishes to be integrated into Danish society must be in want of help to do so”

### Mission

“We want to be the best problem-solver in regard to displacement and integration.”

### Mandate

DRC is a private, independent, non-governmental, 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 durable solutions to the populations affected by forced migration. DRC works in the context of *conflict-induced displacements of populations* and in return and reintegration situations.

DRC fulfils its mandate through:

- Providing 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;
- Advocating on behalf of conflict-affected populations internationally and in Denmark.

In Denmark, DRC assists refugees in all aspects of integration as well as asylum procedures. Internationally, DRC actively participates in the cooperative effort to promote solutions for conflict-affected populations. DRC is the only organisation of its kind in Europe covering all aspects of the refugee and displacement cause.

### Values and standards

The following values and standards can be found on DRC's website and apply to the entire organisation and its staff in Denmark and abroad:

- Value Compass
- Cooperation standards
- Management standards
- Management concept

### Organisation

DRC is an umbrella organisation consisting of 30 organisation members broadly representing civil society in Denmark committed to the refugee cause, as well as some 350 voluntary groups. Its head office in

---

<sup>1</sup> DRC's complete international accountability framework comprises the present global HAF and area-specific HAFs with additional commitments specific for the area in question.

Copenhagen is organised under a Secretary General and comprises of the following three operational departments: Asylum & Society, Integration and International (international programmes). They are supported by the Resources & Development (administration) and the Communication & Fundraising departments. Outside Denmark, DRC works in 27 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
- Cluster Monition Coalition

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**

DRC's mandate for international programming is the protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement-affected populations, 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 organisations. 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.

### **Code of Conduct**

A DRC Code of Conduct applies to all staff in DRC's international programmes. It is available on DRC's website.

### **International key instruments, standards and codes that DRC subscribes to**

[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
- [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 Humanitarian Accountability Principles (HAP)
  - The Principles for Humanitarian Action (HAP)
- [Related to humanitarian removal of explosive remnants of war (ERW):]
- 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
- IMAS standards (humanitarian mine action)

### Scope and funding of the international work

Under its mandate, DRC International focuses on protection, relief, rehabilitation, post-conflict recovery, capacity-building, humanitarian mine-action, and advocacy. Over the years, DRC has developed particular expertise in relation to:

Core sectors:

- Housing and Small-Scale Infrastructure
- Production and Income Generation
- Food security & Agricultural rehabilitation and Development
- Non-food items
- Displacement-related Law and Information
- Social Rehabilitation
- Capacity Development of Duty-Bearers and NGOs (including networking)
- Humanitarian Mine Action (DDG – Danish De-mining Group)

Support sectors:

- Information Management and Coordination
- Emergency Logistics and Transport Management
- Stand-by Roster for Secondment of Personnel to UN emergency operations.

Most of DRC International's activities are implemented by DRC programme structures set up locally for the purpose to work with beneficiaries, local authorities and other stakeholders. However, DRC also implements through local partners when this is the best way to meet DRC's mandate and values. In such cases, DRC is committed to assist the implementing partner strengthen its accountability and capacity.

DRC International's activities are funded by money raised from the Danish public and by project grants from the Danish government and other bilateral governmental donors, the European Union, and the United Nations.

### Strategic programme approaches

Contextual analysis and programming that recognize the dynamics of displacements:

- Displacement often transcends real or virtual borders, and so should DRC's contributions to finding solutions
- Assistance must target both the displaced and those otherwise affected by displacement, as well as recognise the dynamics between the displaced and other affected populations
- Although displacement scenarios may principally be categorised as either (a) *Acute Crisis*, (b) *Protracted Displacement* or (c) *Durable Solutions* scenarios and the corresponding assistance be categorised as (i) *Saving of lives*, (ii) *Restoration and development of livelihoods*, and (iii) *Institutional and organisational change*, respectively, most displacement situations simultaneously contain elements and potentials for all three. So should, therefore, the assistance provided. While using distinctly different approaches according to category, assistance in any situation must always look for potentials for building capacity for durable solutions.

Rights-based programming:

- Focusing on the challenges of making duty-bearer stakeholders take up their responsibilities to protect people affected by conflict, during displacement and after;
- Filling-in as much as possible when the duty-bearers are unwilling or unable to do so;
- Encouraging and supporting "rights-holders" to claim and practice their rights.

### **Programming principles**

...are related to:

- Entry
- Targeting
- Modes of delivery
- Exit (When fundamental rights related to DRC's capacity are upheld and protected by willing and capable national and international institutions).

### **Operational principles**

...are related to:

- Participation
- Capacity Development
- Gender
- Advocacy
- Do-No-Harm
- Collaboration with Local Partners
- Complementarity
- General Replicability of Strategies and Methodologies
- Sustainability
- Environment

### **Monitoring and evaluation – a quality management system**

Monitoring and evaluation of DRC's assistance is 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 country programmes 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 thematic reviews per year.

## **CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF DRC INTERNATIONAL'S ACCOUNTABILITY TO ITS BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

### **Status of June 2010**

DRC's international operations were certified under the *HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management* for the first time in 2007 and re-certified for another three years in June 2010.

Before the recertification, DRC had addressed 8 *Corrective Action Requested* points from the 2007 certification and carried out accountability self-assessments in 23 country operations. The recertification is based on an independent audit carried out at DRC's Copenhagen head office and at DRC's country office in Kosovo, following the ISO 19011:2002 Auditor Standard.

An independent accountability audit in March 2007 found that DRC International was in compliance with the. The audit identified a number of areas where DRC must further strengthen its accountability instruments. The areas were included in DRC's Accountability Improvement Plan of October 2008. 23 extensive country programme self-assessments of November 2009, followed by an HQ self-assessment, showed that the old AIP was generally met.

### **Accountability Improvement Plan (AIP)**

The re-certification audit resulted in 3 *CARs*, which are included in DRC's revised Accountability Improvement Plan. The AIP also comprises DRC's Strategic Focal Areas for internal development, identified through DRC's local and global strategic planning process. The AIP is an integral part of DRC's accountability framework and is available on DRC's website

## **Strategic planning in DRC International**

### In DRC programmes:

Internal annual programme reviews are conducted in order to, first, systematically review progress of the underlying projects, second, to revisit the validity of programme goals and assumptions and third, to engage in a process of strategic planning for the future. Annual reviews are jointly conducted by project and HO staff, and are carefully prepared through impact studies, beneficiary and stakeholder workshops, external evaluations or sector reviews. The annual reviews must include the accountability commitments undertaken by DRC and also consider the need for external reviews/evaluations.

### At Head Office:

The annual meeting of all DRC country directors and HO programme coordinators recommend/revise DRC International's Strategic Focal Areas, following which they are decided and resourced by the management. Beneficiaries and field staff influence the process through the local annual review. HO makes a meta-evaluation of the annual programme review reports, which is fed into the annual meeting. For the period 2010-2012 this process is combined with the *Version 2012* goals defined for the entire DRC (i.e. including the domestic activities for beneficiaries in Denmark). The overall goal of *Version 2012* is growth and development of DRC so as to support more beneficiaries better.

Each Strategic Focal Areas is accorded an HQ Focal Point and normally supported by peer groups of HO and field staff. The progress of the SFAs is monitored by the management of DRC's International department. The peer groups can be contacted through the Focal Points (details are in the AIP).

## **COMPLAINTS**

DRC International and its staff must comply with this Humanitarian Accountability Framework. Complaints regarding non-compliance should be submitted as follows:

- Field programmes: Through the Complaint Mechanism of the programme in question. If there is no local Complaint Mechanism: Through the resident DRC country director.
- DRC International Head Office: Through the Head of DRC International.

## **Annex**

- AIP of June 2010