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Good Morning!

The theme I was given in this panel is

Helping civilians through humanitarian organizations – the role of States.

As it wasn't defined whether I should address the issue of affected states or assisting states, I thought I could say a few words about both. In so doing, I will also roughly explain how we work at my Unit for Humanitarian Assistance.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the responsible authority for humanitarian assistance in the Government. About 70 million euro is yearly spent on this activity. The funds come from the budget line for official development assistance, the so called ODA-funds, the total of which this year is around 751 million euro. Globally the figure for the western humanitarian assistance is around 18 billion dollars yearly which constitute about 13% of the total global ODA in 2008.

(Global ODA in 2008 USD 83 billion out of that around 13 % went into humanitarian assistance. Finnish ODA in 2008 was 682 million euro. In 2010 the ODA is 751 million euros).

I would like to start my presentation with a power point in which the responsibility of the state is mentioned as a part of an important UN resolution, 46/182.

This resolution states quite clearly that

- “the affected state has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory” .

This resolution means – for better or worse – that the work of international aid actors depends on the consent of the affected state; whether the state is strong or weak, abusive or concerned for its citizens' welfare, it is still the central determinant of whether or not humanitarian actors can be present in crises.

I will come back to the issue of the role of the affected state a bit later, but first I will dwell a while on the role of the assisting state, and in this case Finland, and talk a bit about how we work.

This resolution 46/182 - which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1991 - is important in many ways, just to name three of them here

1. Based on it, the Department for Humanitarian Assistance at the UN Headquarters was formed, which later became the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs = the UN OCHA, led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Under-Secretary General, who at the moment is Sir John Holmes from the UK
2. This resolution also gave the mandate and responsibility to the UN to be the Global Lead and coordinator in humanitarian operations
3. It laid the ground for the humanitarian reforms that subsequently has taken place

It is not exaggerated to say that ever since the beginning of the 1990's, the humanitarian work of the UN has improved and become more efficient. The UN has in the various reform efforts developed

- The Consolidated Appeals Process,
- The Central Emergency Response Fund,
- An increasing attention on the Humanitarian Coordinators' capacity to work as such,
- The cluster system, through which the various UN agencies have been given sectoral responsibilities in given emergency operations
- closer cooperation with the NGOs which are the main implementers in humanitarian operations

Having said this – it needs to be added that the work is not yet finished, and new challenges emerge all the time asking for continuous refinement in the way the humanitarian community works.

The way the UN system works in emergencies has implications for how the member states work. In the case of Finland it needs to be said that we are not operational at the field level but we are financing the UN system and some of our NGO's. Here of course I have to mention the Finnish Red Cross, as well as the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement which both are important partners. And - the Finnish Red Cross is an auxiliary body to the state.

As I mentioned, Finland is not operational at the field level, which means that we do not administer bilateral humanitarian operations. This is very much a resource question. As the humanitarian principles stress the only possibly approach – the needs based and demand driven approach – as opposed to supply driven approach – it is understandable that identifying projects and carrying out needs assessments at field level in various sectors would require a totally different apparatus than what we have. Consequently we work through the UN system and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and rely on the assessments carried out by their experts.

The UN sends us twice a year a consolidated appeal, which means a coordinated priority request addressing the most needy complex emergencies. So does the Red Cross. While funding an operation – always only partly - we know that the assessment and the infrastructure of the operation has been taken care of, without being involved in it ourselves.

Between requests to fund the consolidated appeals for complex emergencies, sudden onset emergencies occur – like the earthquake in Haiti, or Pakistan, or floods in Mozambique, etc. In cases of natural disasters the system produces a Flash Appeal towards which we respond with funds. We might then finance a number of sectors, like in the case of Haiti health, shelter, water and sanitation, and food. All this in order to protect the affected people as much as possible through assistance to various sectors.

I would now like to return to the question of affected state, and show the second of my two power points. This describes in more detail the role of the affected state, which is four-fold:

1. The states are responsible for “calling” a crises and inviting international aid
2. They provide assistance and protection themselves
3. They are responsible for monitoring and coordination of external assistance
4. They set the regulatory and legal frameworks governing the assistance

When I earlier mentioned that more needs to be done, I was referring to the role of the affected states. In recent years the role of affected states in responding to disasters within their borders has begun to attract renewed attention. This is in part a result of the increasing wealth of some developing countries, their growing willingness and ability to respond to disasters without external assistance and their emergence as providers of external aid themselves. Countries like India (rejected assistance following tsunami), Indonesia and Pakistan and also Mozambique (now with improved capacity of its own to respond to floods) belong to this category. Then, obviously there are a number of countries which do not yet have this capacity. With the emergence of increasing natural disasters the question of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) capacities is rising. The IFRC has just recently developed the International Disaster Response Laws in order to build their National Societies capacity in this respect.

The issue of engaging more with the affected states is probably one of the major themes emerging in the humanitarian reform process. The sovereignty matter of a state is a case in point. There is a feeling of a general shift in approaches and thinking within the sector within agencies (UN, NGOs and Red Cross) that they have started to pay greater attention to how they relate to states and states starting to be more assertive. How this will develop further will be of great importance as well as interest to the humanitarian community.

I would like to end my presentation reminding everybody of the four humanitarian principles to which we adhere; Humanitarian assistance is provided based on **humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence**. Finland will implement its humanitarian agenda according to these principles to which we are committed through the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative at the OECD/DAC, through the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and International Humanitarian Law in general.

THE ROLE OF STATES IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

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