



Federal Foreign Office



# Federal Foreign Office Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad





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2019 to 2023



Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs © Thomas Imo/photothek.net

One of my first journeys as Foreign Minister brought me to a refugee camp in Jordan. There, a Syrian family – father, mother and two children – invited me into their home, consisting only of a single small room and equipped with the bare necessities that they were able to take when fleeing from Syria. All the more was I touched by the warmth, with which the family invited me to tea and pastries. Not welcoming a guest was out of the question for them. They had lost almost everything in Syria, but they had kept their dignity.

Article 1 of the *1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Humanitarian assistance puts this act of humanity into action. It saves people in the most desperate situations – regardless of where they came from, what they think or believe, no matter how they look like or how old they are. It is the essence of *humanitas*, of being human.

Humanitarian workers help those injured after earthquakes and other natural disasters; they save people from starvation and provide them with medicine to protect them against deadly diseases; they assist people to process their traumatic experiences and they give

those in need the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families. This work is again and again carried out under the most difficult conditions and at the risk of their own lives. They are the heroines and heroes of our time and they deserve recognition and admiration. However, we also need to ensure that humanitarian workers are better protected in conflict situations and that International Humanitarian Law and the humanitarian principles are respected and complied with.

All of this is supported and advocated for by Germany. Our new *Federal Foreign Office Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad* sets out our priorities and how we will engage in the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heiko Maas', written in a cursive style.

Heiko Maas  
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

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# Foreword

The German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) published its first *Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad* in 2012. Since then, the international humanitarian system and the way humanitarian assistance is delivered have changed and developed further – not the least following the *World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)* held in Istanbul in May 2016. This new strategy explains how Germany will develop its profile as a principled humanitarian donor and partner over the coming years. It positions humanitarian assistance in the overall context of German foreign policy and presents its thematic priorities. It also describes Germany's role as a humanitarian donor, its support of humanitarian action and its contribution to shaping the international humanitarian system.



# Germany as a humanitarian donor

Humanitarian assistance is an integral and defining component of German foreign policy. It is part of civil crisis management, but has the sole purpose of achieving humanitarian objectives. Humanitarian assistance is an expression of our ethical responsibility towards, and solidarity with, people in need. The Federal Foreign Office is committed to the humanitarian principles and on this basis contributes to the advancement of the international humanitarian system.

This means that the Federal Foreign Office aims first and foremost to meet the needs of the people affected by crises and embraces its responsibility towards them. It informs the German public in a transparent and comprehensible manner on how it uses public funds for this purpose.

The Federal Foreign Office acts pre-emptively: It not only responds to a crisis or disaster, but seeks to minimise humanitarian impacts of disasters. It strives to provide its partners with the maximum flexibility by keeping administrative requirements at a reasonable level. It follows internationally recognised quality standards and documents the impact of its work.

UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations are its most important partners. In addition to these three pillars, the Federal Foreign Office also cooperates with other partners and civil society organisations. The relations with them are built on mutual trust. This is true both in Germany and at the international level, where the Federal Foreign Office is committed to working towards an efficient and effective humanitarian system which constantly improves and, like ourselves, puts the affected populations at the centre of its work.



*Hurricane Matthew in Haiti (2016) © Logan Abassi UN/MINUSTAH*

# 1. Context and challenges

With the increasing frequency and length of conflicts and disasters, global humanitarian needs have risen dramatically over the last years. Today, more people than ever are dependent on humanitarian assistance, which predominantly must be delivered in protracted and complex conflicts as well as in fragile states. This increasingly requires multi-year, forward-looking action sensitive to context and to the linkages to development cooperation as well as a whole-of-government approach.

Humanitarian access becomes more and more restricted with humanitarian organisations' ability to operate being severely affected in many places. Time and again, parties to conflicts disregard International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and civilian populations are, with increasing frequency, deliberately targeted by violent attacks. The importance of humanitarian protection is therefore growing. Ensuring such protection is not an easy task due to complicating factors, such as the rise of non-state armed groups. To ensure and preserve humanitarian access, *humanitarian diplomacy* becomes more and more important. It includes negotiations with conflict parties, decision-makers and other stakeholders – states and non-state actors alike – that encourage them to act at all times in the interests of affected populations and in accordance with the humanitarian principles.

Many people continue to be adversely affected by natural disasters. People living in less developed or fragile countries are particularly vulnerable to the worst outcomes of such disasters, such as loss of livelihoods and displacement. The impact of climate change and the associated increase in extreme weather events aggravate this problem. In an ever more interconnected world, the risk and dimension of large-scale industrial accidents should also not be underestimated. The perils of global health risks and the resulting potential challenges for humanitarian assistance have also increased significantly.

As more and more people are displaced by conflicts, violence or persecution and in need of humanitarian assistance, host communities face major challenges as well. They must therefore be taken into account and involved in humanitarian action from the outset.

Humanitarian assistance is also increasingly needed in urban contexts. Displaced populations increasingly migrate towards urban centres adding to uncontrolled urbanisation, which can result in new humanitarian needs. If these urban contexts are in disaster-prone or fragile countries, logistics, humanitarian access and humanitarian protection become increasingly challenging and complex.

As front-line responders, local actors often bear the greatest risks and provide the most important share of immediate assistance in emergencies. This is not sufficiently acknowledged. They cannot easily access existing coordination structures and financing mechanisms, and their expertise of the local context has yet to be adequately utilised. The participation of affected populations across the humanitarian programme cycle also needs to be enhanced further. Affected populations must, to a greater extent, be treated as active agents rather than passive recipients of assistance. This applies particularly to women, young people and persons with disabilities, whose inclusion is particularly limited in most crisis contexts.

Different social groups have different needs. Assistance can only be effective if it takes into account the particularities of all groups concerned, whether in terms of gender or physical barriers to access to food and jobs or in terms of the selection of humanitarian supplies or cash transfer modalities.

The *humanitarian ecosystem* no longer only consists of the traditional stakeholders coordinated by the United Nations. Today, it also includes international financial institutions, philanthropists, charitable organisations, diaspora groups, foundations and private sector stakeholders, who are often not guided by humanitarian principles, but by their own interests or ideologies. These entities also help to meet humanitarian needs and are important. However, they operate differently and often selectively without due regard to the humanitarian principle of Impartiality.

Technological developments offer great opportunities for humanitarian assistance. Examples include ongoing improvements to communications, the digital transformation and cashless payment modalities, as well as new ways of offering assistance remotely in areas that the Federal Foreign Office or its partners have only very limited access to, or no access at all. However, such developments also create new challenges, such as data protection or the introduction of adequate regulatory frameworks for new technologies.





*Refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh (2018) © kyodo/dpa*

## 2. Humanitarian assistance in German foreign policy

Humanitarian assistance is an expression of ethical responsibility and international solidarity and does not pursue any interest-driven goals. Upholding the humanitarian principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence is a key prerequisite for humanitarian assistance. Its highest goal is to ensure that affected people live in dignity and security, to offer them perspectives and to alleviate their suffering. Humanitarian assistance helps people affected by severe conflicts or natural disasters, who lost their livelihoods or who are at acute risk of suffering.

Humanitarian assistance is a defining and integral component of Germany's foreign policy. It contributes greatly to the Federal Government's engagement in crises and conflicts. In some instances, principled humanitarian assistance can also lay the groundwork for stabilisation measures and can contribute to building a sustainable framework for development and peace.

The Federal Government has a broad range of instruments at its disposal for assuming greater international responsibility for peace, freedom, development and security. Its foreign policy – with these instruments – is to decisively and substantially intervene in early stages of crises and conflicts, which also corresponds with the Federal Government's shaping role in foreign affairs. The *Federal Government's Guidelines on Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace*, adopted in 2017, are important in this context. The coherent approach defined in them aims to achieve a whole-of-government approach supported by society at large in fragile regions and those affected by conflicts. The overriding goal is to prevent violent conflicts as far as possible. Wherever this is not possible, ways of reducing violence should be identified in order to facilitate rules-based mechanisms for the peaceful long-term resolution of conflicts.





Refugee camp in Amran, Yemen (2016) © Kate Wiggins/Oxfam

### 3. Legal and normative underpinnings



In light of frequent violations of International Humanitarian Law, an unprecedented number of attacks on humanitarian workers and increasingly restricted humanitarian access, the participants at the 2016 *World Humanitarian Summit*, including the Federal Government, reaffirmed their commitment to the humanitarian principles and humanitarian law, notably the four *Geneva Conventions* of 1949 and their *Additional Protocols* of 1977, which comprise fundamental rules of conduct in armed conflicts.

In 1965, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement distilled seven principles on the basis of IHL: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary service, Unity and Universality. The principles of Humanity, Impartiality and Neutrality were recognised in 1991 by *UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182* as the basis for global humanitarian assistance. The 2003 *General Assembly Resolution 58/114* added the principle of Independence to this canon.

In addition, since the beginning of the 1990s, humanitarian actors have developed and committed to a series of standards and frameworks. They include, in particular, the *Red Cross Code of Conduct* of 1995, the *Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship* of 2003, the *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid* of 2007 and the *Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)* of 2014.

The implementation of the Federal Foreign Office's humanitarian assistance is mindful of three further principles, namely the focus on needs, subsidiarity and doing no harm. Accordingly, the nature and extent of humanitarian needs are a key criterion for providing assistance. Such assistance is granted only where the government of the state concerned or other stakeholders are themselves unable or unwilling to provide the assistance necessary. Humanitarian assistance should meet urgent needs without causing harmful side effects (*do no harm*), while contributing to the resilience of those affected, strengthening humanitarian partner structures for the future and, where possible, preparing for development cooperation measures. The humanitarian assistance of the Federal Foreign Office is respectful of affected people's fundamental rights, such as the right to life, physical and mental integrity, personal freedom and freedom of expression.

As a member of the *Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative*, the Federal Government committed, among other things, to provide, as much as possible, flexible, unearmarked and multi-year humanitarian funding and to promote joint learning with partners.

In the context of the *World Humanitarian Summit* and the *Grand Bargain*, the Federal Government has also made extensive commitments to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance, including through increasing multi-annual funding, greater support for local stakeholders, humanitarian disaster risk reduction, inclusion, gender-sensitivity, as well as through the increased use of cash as a response modality.

Other important standards and frameworks include the following:

- In the area of forced displacement and migration: the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* as the central international legal basis; based on this the *New York Declaration (2016)* and the *Global Compact on Refugees*, as well as the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*;
- For humanitarian disaster risk reduction: the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*;
- For protection from gender-based violence in crisis situations: *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (2013)*;
- For humanitarian civilian-military coordination: the *Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines)*; and the *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines)*.





*Provision of food in a Syrian refugee camp (2013) © Abeer Etefa/WFP*

## 4. Needs-based assistance

Although funding for humanitarian assistance, including that of the Federal Foreign Office, has globally increased significantly in recent years, the gap between global needs and available resources has continued to widen; many of the *Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)* drawn up by the United Nations each year are chronically underfunded.

This confronts the Federal Foreign Office with difficult decisions as it allocates its funds to humanitarian actors and regions. Adequate presence on the ground is essential to make and to review such decisions. To this end, the Federal Foreign Office not only draws on its own capacities but also consults other humanitarian donors and partners. General foreign policy considerations can also play a role in the decision-making process.

The Federal Foreign Office allocates its funds based on various selection criteria, which are set out in the regularly updated key strategy papers on individual crises and countries as well as in the sector strategies. This means that, in accordance with the principle of Impartiality, humanitarian assistance is provided solely on the basis of need and without discriminating affected groups or individuals – for example on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, faith, disability, state of health, political or other opinions, national or social origin.

This applies both to the allocation of resources between different crisis contexts and within a specific crisis. The Federal Foreign Office aims to deploy funds efficiently and effectively in the various crises. When allocating funds, it also takes into account the planning of other donors as well as the presence and capacity of the partners involved in the respective context.

Annual planning is based in particular on the *HRPs* coordinated by the UN system and the appeals by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Federal Foreign Office is committed to improving these needs assessments to ensure that they provide a reliable basis for setting priorities. It is with this in mind that the Federal Foreign Office also supports the independent reviews of the quality of needs assessments as agreed to in the *Grand Bargain*. The Federal Foreign Office is committed to transparent and, where possible, jointly conducted needs assessments in accordance with agreed quality standards. This needs analysis must be independent of the subsequent prioritisation and decision-making process. The Federal Foreign Office expects its partners to participate in these joint assessments and to base their own assessments on these standards.

Affected populations must be actively involved in the assessment process. This is an important prerequisite for ensuring that the assistance provided at a later stage actually meets the needs on the ground. The Federal Foreign Office expects its partners to actively engage with diverse groups among the affected population to strengthen transparency, trust and accountability *vis-à-vis* affected populations.

The Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), both managed by the UN system, are tried and tested mechanisms to address priority needs set out in the *HRPs*. They make needs assessments more systematic and enable humanitarian partners to deliver timely and effective life-saving assistance to the people who need it most. CBPF and CERF allocations are designed to complement other humanitarian funding sources, such as bilateral funding, and hence facilitate greater coherence of the overall response. For this purpose, these mechanisms must work transparently, in a principled manner and according to agreed quality standards.

The primacy of needs orientation also includes taking the subsidiarity principle and the role of the government of the affected state seriously. The latter has the primary responsibility for meeting the needs of its population and must therefore play a leading role in assessing needs and coordinating relief efforts. Restrictions may arise if it is not prepared or willing to assess and meet humanitarian needs impartially. Principled humanitarian action can also mean that needs not met by the government are prioritised by international humanitarian partners.

Humanitarian needs are often greatest in places where access for humanitarian organisations is most difficult. Strictly adhering to humanitarian principles is a prerequisite for accessing people in need, especially in armed conflicts. Local organisations are sometimes better placed to overcome access challenges, as they may be more suited to reach remote areas in complex conflicts. This means however, that their personnel are potentially exposed to major risks. Humanitarian organisations must therefore carefully weigh the risks to their staff against the humanitarian needs they seek to address. The Federal Foreign Office understands that providing assistance in these contexts can entail higher costs.

Sanctions regimes without clear humanitarian exemption clauses may restrict the ability of humanitarian organisations to address humanitarian needs. Access to those most in need must also be possible where, for example, anti-terror regimes prohibit the dialogue with specific groups.

In protracted crises, many of which are no longer in the public eye, needs often remain at a high level for years because people's resilience is weakened and because they are at the mercy of cyclical flare-ups of violence. It is particularly important here to recognize any increase in humanitarian needs early enough, while at the same time guaranteeing a long-term minimum level of support and ensuring timely coordination with other instruments of the Federal Government.



*Signatories' meeting of the Grand Bargain on 5 and 6 September 2016 in Bonn © Auswärtiges Amt*

## 5. Shaping the international humanitarian system



The Federal Foreign Office is committed to the international humanitarian system coordinated by the United Nations. It acknowledges the leading role played by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) and, in refugee contexts, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, the Federal Foreign Office recognizes the so-called *cluster approach*, through which the UN and other humanitarian organisations coordinate their work in the various sectors of humanitarian assistance.

To play an active role in further developing the humanitarian system, the Federal Foreign Office implements its commitments it made at the *World Humanitarian Summit* and in the context of the *Grand Bargain*. Furthermore, it participates in relevant international organisations and steering committees. It is, for instance, involved in the *Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative* and has a seat in supervisory bodies of UNHCR, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in the Advisory Group of the CERF and is part of the *Donor Support Groups* of UN-OCHA and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Additionally, the support for and the promotion of German staff in multilateral humanitarian assistance organisations is strengthened in order to not only expand the strategic exchange with these organisations, but also to enhance Germany's humanitarian expertise.

The Federal Government is committed to continue and expand its support for UNRWA and to the organisation's systematic reform process in order to ensure its efficiency and financial sustainability in the future.

The Federal Foreign Office is also working to improve the participation of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as local actors and structures in the UN-coordinated international humanitarian system.

Likewise, the Federal Foreign Office values its close relationship with other European donors and the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission (ECHO) and participates in the EU Council Working Party on Humanitarian Assistance and Food Aid (COHAFA). At the same time, the Federal Foreign Office advocates for engaging new and non-traditional donors in the international

humanitarian system. It also takes into consideration the increasing importance of other stakeholders, including philanthropists, charitable organisations, diaspora support groups and private-sector companies.

The Federal Foreign Office is committed to identifying funding modalities which allow for efficient and effective humanitarian assistance. Within the donor community, it promotes, among other things, multi-annual funding commitments and advocates for the increased provision of unearmarked or flexible funds. In particular, the Federal Foreign Office promotes *Forecast-based Financing (FbF)* in the field of humanitarian disaster risk reduction, as well as the increased use of cash as a response modality. It is also looking to build on its leading role in efforts to simplify and harmonise reporting obligations.

In addition, the Federal Foreign Office supports international efforts to make humanitarian assistance more inclusive, by taking into account the specific needs of women and men, girls and boys, people of all ages and those with disabilities and by enabling them to participate in all phases of the assistance provision. We expect our partners to do the same.

As a pioneer in the field of humanitarian disaster risk reduction, the Federal Foreign Office supports the paradigm shift initiated at the *World Humanitarian Summit* towards an anticipatory and forward-looking humanitarian system that identifies potential crises and disasters at an early stage and thus anticipates and reduces negative impacts and potential humanitarian needs through improved early warning mechanisms. This is also in line with the implementation of the *Sendai Framework* for a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction.

In the context of forced migration, the Federal Foreign Office supports the implementation of the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)* as an integral part of the *Global Compact for Refugees* in all major refugee situations. By better interlinking humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and other relevant instruments, long-term humanitarian needs can be reduced and durable solutions for refugees be identified more easily.





*Water provision in Belet Weyne, Somalia (2018) © Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe*

## 6. Key topics

Humanitarian assistance is only effective if it adequately considers the needs of all affected groups. For this reason, the Federal Foreign Office supports innovative approaches which ensure, to the extent possible, that people affected by crises and conflicts receive exactly the assistance they need – as timely and efficiently as possible. Particularly vulnerable groups therefore receive special attention in each of the Federal Foreign Office’s key policy areas. Moreover, in cooperation with its partners, the Federal Foreign Office develops specific strategies for selected policy areas (*list of existing strategies in Appendix III*).<sup>1</sup>

## Protection

Protection is a key component of all humanitarian action. Humanitarian protection encompasses “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. Human Rights Law, IHL, Refugee Law).”<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian assistance in this area therefore comprises specific, targeted protection measures and makes protection a cross-cutting issue (*protection mainstreaming*).

The strategic priorities are as follows:

- **Prevention, countermeasures, treatment and follow-up care in the context of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV):** The Federal Foreign Office specifically promotes measures and initiatives that aim at protecting particularly vulnerable persons and helping them to protect themselves. Although the primary target group is women and girls, men and boys are increasingly affected as well. Providing medical, legal and socio-economic support to SGBV survivors, victims and their children, as well as fighting stigmatisation, are central aspects in this policy area. A special focus of the Federal Foreign Office’s humanitarian assistance is interlinking humanitarian protection and sexual/reproductive health care.

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1 These strategies provide a detailed break-down of the thematic priorities, principles and approaches that are presented here. They answer questions such as: What are the main challenges in this specific area? How does the Federal Foreign Office position itself in this policy area? How is the adherence to humanitarian principles ensured in certain priority areas? What are the implications in regards to shaping the international humanitarian system?

2 Definition by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

- **Legal protection:** The Federal Foreign Office will increasingly support activities and initiatives that inform and advise on relevant law in order to provide practical assistance in and to raise awareness of status determination and civil registration processes; thus, empowering people affected by conflict and disasters to demand and enforce their claim to international protection.
- **Protection of sensitive data:** Technological developments and new means of communication are creating many opportunities for humanitarian action, but they also pose major risks to affected people. The Federal Foreign Office will increase its support for awareness-raising and training measures for sensitive treatment of personal data.

*Humanitarian diplomacy* is vital for maintaining a *humanitarian protection space*. This is why the Federal Foreign Office supports humanitarian organisations in building their capacity to this end.

## Forced displacement

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Where people are forced to leave their homes or even their home country, as refugees or as internally displaced persons (IDPs), humanitarian assistance ensures their survival, dignity and security. Refugee protection and providing timely and needs-based assistance to refugees and displaced persons are priorities of the Federal Foreign Office's humanitarian assistance. While humanitarian assistance is by no means a tool for reducing the root causes of forced displacement, it can contribute to preventing refugees from being forced to embark on, or continue dangerous journeys. To avoid prolonged displacement, the Federal Foreign Office supports comprehensive approaches, including coordinated planning by humanitarian and development actors at the very beginning of large displacement crises. *The Global Compact on Refugees* is the central framework for this process. Accordingly, the Federal Foreign Office is committed to support the implementation of the pact politically and strategically as well as financially. For the large number of refugees, for whom durable solutions have not yet been found, either through voluntary return to their home country, integration into a host country, or *resettlement*, the Federal Foreign Office works with its partners to provide effective assistance and protection and to find durable solutions. By meeting humanitarian needs in the countries of origin, humanitarian assistance can help to facilitate the voluntary, safe

and humane return of displaced persons. In situations of mixed refugee and migration flows, those with the purpose of migration may also encounter a humanitarian emergency and require assistance.

As an important donor, the Federal Foreign Office is a key humanitarian actor in the context of forced displacement. UNHCR, the UN agency mandated to offer protection to refugees, is the main partner of the Federal Foreign Office in this policy area.

### Anticipatory and forward-looking humanitarian assistance

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The Federal Foreign Office calls for and promotes humanitarian assistance that goes beyond merely reacting to crises and disasters. On the basis of forecasts, risk and conflict analyses and by using proven instruments (e.g. humanitarian pooled funds), anticipatory and forward-looking humanitarian assistance aims at enhancing the performance and the *preparedness for response* capacities of humanitarian actors prior to disasters and crises. It also seeks to create the closest possible interconnectivity between these actors, so that they can successfully address the consequences of acute crises, conflicts and disasters.

In view of the threat of severe natural disasters and the effects of climate change, humanitarian disaster risk reduction plays an important role. This includes measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, improve early warning systems and better prepare for future catastrophic events. It is therefore a key component of German humanitarian assistance. Innovative instruments, such as *Forecast-based Financing (FbF)* and approaches addressing a number of natural hazards at once (so-called *multi-hazard approaches*) are being further expanded.

Moreover, instruments that have proven to be valuable for humanitarian disaster risk reduction will be adapted for more effective use in crises, conflicts and urban environments. The Federal Foreign Office will therefore expand its anticipatory approaches of humanitarian assistance to other contexts. As part of this effort, the Federal Foreign Office humanitarian assistance divisions closely work with in-house units that monitor and analyse the development of and changes in crises situations. The Federal Foreign Office pays special attention to how data are collected and evaluated, and how specific

triggers can be defined for the disbursement of funds. Challenges in this area that need to be addressed in the future include the feasibility of risk-based funding models in crisis-prone countries and whether these could be used for humanitarian assistance purposes.

## Cash

Humanitarian assistance is increasingly delivered in the form of cash or vouchers; approximately ten per cent of assistance reaches those in need via these two modalities. The potential of cash, however, is estimated at more than 40 per cent of the total volume of assistance. Hence, at the *World Humanitarian Summit* and as part of the *Grand Bargain*, Germany has committed to significantly increase the use of cash in its humanitarian programming and to always ask: “Why not cash?” The Federal Foreign Office therefore requires its partners to provide a precise analysis which modality of assistance is most suitable to address humanitarian needs in a particular context. It is often advisable to combine the provision of cash with the distribution of goods that are currently not available in local markets and/or the provision of services (for example, for safe shelter, adequate sanitation or health care).



Cash Card distribution in Amman, Jordan (2013)  
© René Schulthoff/DRK

The Federal Foreign Office considers cash as a very effective form of support in suitable contexts: It allows people affected by crises to meet their basic needs in a comprehensive, responsible and dignified way. Cash assistance may prevent a decline in value as a consequence of reselling relief goods that are not – or not urgently – needed. The increasing use of electronic transfers can facilitate the provision of assistance in a rapid and safe way. At the same time, local markets and economy are strengthened and new



jobs may be created (*multiplier effect*). Due to comparatively low transaction costs, cash assistance is also a cost-efficient way of support; economies of scale may be achieved in programmes with large volumes.

Together with its humanitarian partner organisations and other donors, the Federal Foreign Office supports the scaling-up of innovative approaches to cash assistance and the creation of more evidence regarding its effectiveness and efficiency in comparison to other forms of assistance. German humanitarian assistance aims to use cash as widely as possible throughout the policy area; wherever appropriate, *multi-purpose cash assistance* should be considered. If framework conditions permit it and when assistance to refugees and/or IDPs must be provided over a long period of time, cash can promote linkages to social protection systems.

## Nutrition and food security

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Hunger, food insecurity and under- and malnutrition are serious consequences of natural disasters, violent conflicts and crises. Humanitarian food assistance contributes to combating these effects and represents thus a priority area for German humanitarian assistance. The largest partner of the Federal Foreign Office in the field of humanitarian food assistance is the WFP.

Humanitarian food assistance is primarily aimed at contributing to food and nutrition security in emergency situations and protracted crises, minimizing negative coping strategies (such as disposing of productive goods, keeping children out of school) and contributing to the restoration of livelihoods.

Measures include the provision of cash assistance, food vouchers or food (with or without conditions), direct nutrition interventions for specific target groups, such as therapeutic feeding in cases of severe, acute malnutrition, securing livelihoods, for example by providing material and functional inputs to the population for the rapid resumption of agricultural production, as well as accompanying measures to restore the livelihoods of those affected, including through training or information campaigns. In addition to the mere guarantee of caloric adequate food intake, the quality of nutrition also plays an important role in humanitarian assistance.

The Federal Foreign Office is committed to a multi-dimensional understanding of food and nutrition security that encompasses aspects of availability, access to as well as use and utilisation of food. In addition, Germany pursues a multi-sectoral approach in the sense of a comprehensive coverage of humanitarian needs. For example, the adequate use and recycling of food provided can only be ensured if the persons concerned have access to adequate (potable) water, sanitation and hygiene measures.

## Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

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Humanitarian assistance in the sectors of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) has the objective to meet basic human needs during severe emergencies and protracted crises. This includes, for example, the provision of, and access to, potable water and hygienic sewage systems. Safe water supply and sanitation, as well as good hygiene practices, are crucial to prevent the outbreak of water-borne diseases, such as cholera, and communicable diseases like Ebola. Humanitarian action in the area of WASH is also closely tied to food security. Therefore, when supporting WASH activities, the Federal Foreign Office also pays close attention to potential effects in the areas of health and nutrition.

With an increasing number of humanitarian emergencies occurring in urban contexts, humanitarian actors are facing specific challenges regarding WASH. High building and population densities increase the risk of diseases and require higher water and hygiene standards. These factors also make systematically assessing the needs of those affected more difficult, since urban areas require an even closer integration of humanitarian WASH efforts into existing supply systems and a specific adaptation to the respective situation. Therefore, humanitarian actors not only depend upon knowledge of, but also access to local infrastructure and suppliers (electricity, gas, water), as well as a closer cooperation with local actors. All of these factors mean that technologically innovative and flexible approaches, as well as knowledge management and transfer, will become increasingly important for humanitarian assistance measures. With this in mind, the Federal Foreign Office pursues the following strategic objectives: (1) building WASH capacities among local humanitarian actors, (2) strengthening coordination and exchange of knowledge among WASH stakeholders at both global and local level and (3) promoting technological innovation in the WASH sector.

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## Health

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Humanitarian assistance in the health sector seeks to save lives and ensure that those in need can live in dignity and security during severe emergencies and protracted crises.

Priority areas are emergency and basic medical care, prenatal and childbirth care and mental health services, including psychosocial support. During protracted humanitarian crises, treating chronic illnesses becomes increasingly important. To strengthen global humanitarian responsiveness during health crises, the Federal Foreign Office also supports the establishment of emergency medical teams that can be deployed around the world, as well as the *Contingency Fund for Emergencies* of the World Health Organization (WHO). Thereby, it explicitly takes into account the links between health and protection (for example sexual and gender based violence), access to clean drinking water and hygienic sewage systems and nutrition (malnutrition).

Germany will also continue to take an active role in the European Medical Corps (EMC), whose capacities are integrated into the EU's disaster-response procedures. Germany has a leading role in the EMC through the German Red Cross isolation hospital for the treatment of highly infectious patients, the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine's mobile laboratory capacities, and the logistical and technical support provided by the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW).

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## Humanitarian mine action

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Landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) kill and maim thousands of people around the world each year. Humanitarian mine action comprises activities to avert the threat to life posed by mines, ERW and IEDs in the respective population. It furthermore aims to reduce the economic, social and ecological effects of contamination, so as to secure the livelihoods of the affected people.

The Federal Foreign Office campaigns for the global prohibition of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions and supports projects around the world in the field of humanitarian mine action. Among the most affected are particularly vulnerable groups, such as refugees and IDPs, as well as the communities sheltering them and returnees. The projects that the Federal Foreign Office supports fall into the following four core categories, which

complement one another: (1) mine/ERW risk education, (2) mine/ERW survey and clearance, (3) victim assistance and rehabilitation, (4) advocacy and public relations work. Project funding is also strongly motivated by supporting affected countries in succeeding to meet their obligations under the *Ottawa Treaty*, the *Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions* and the *Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons*.

## Other areas

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The Federal Foreign Office recognises the importance of other sectors such as shelter and education (*education in emergencies*) to ensure human dignity in humanitarian crises. Humanitarian logistics also plays a crucial role for the timely and adequate provision of assistance. For the Federal Foreign Office, the involvement and participation of affected populations as well as the complementarity of the various measures and sectors are crucial during the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance in these policy areas.





Distribution of supplies in Jordan (2014) © René Schulthoff/DRK

## 7. How the Federal Foreign Office supports humanitarian assistance

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## Financing instruments

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The Federal Foreign Office provides humanitarian assistance by allocating project and programme grants or earmarked contributions to three established groups of partners: UN agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and NGOs. If required, funding may also be provided for projects of other organisations such as academic institutions, think tanks, the THW or ad hoc coalitions. Projects and programmes can also receive multi-annual funding.

In addition to project and programme funding, the Federal Foreign Office makes voluntary, unearmarked contributions towards funding the basic budget of international organisations and the ICRC, thereby providing these organisations with a reliable planning basis.

Contingency funds ensure that humanitarian assistance can be delivered in the event of sudden onset disasters.

As part of the *Grand Bargain* and to facilitate a more rapid response to urgent needs, the Federal Foreign Office has also committed itself to gradually reduce the share of earmarked contributions. Thus, it contributes to the global goal of allocating a total of 30 per cent of humanitarian funding to be unearmarked or only softly earmarked.

With a view to strengthening international crisis response capacity, the Federal Foreign Office contributes significantly to the CERF. Likewise, CBPFs provide flexible funding for relief activities and are systematically supported by the Federal Foreign Office.

These financing instruments facilitate a timely and well-targeted response to humanitarian needs, while strengthening coordination and the role of UN-OCHA, and allowing local humanitarian actors to build their capacity through direct access to international funding.

In the context of the *World Humanitarian Summit* and the *Grand Bargain*, Germany has also agreed to promote the process of localising humanitarian assistance. A special focus here is building the capacities of local actors to respond to humanitarian crises. This *localisation* of humanitarian assistance will also change the role of international partner

organisations. Given further diversification of relevant actors, partner organisations will need to take a comprehensive approach. Their activities will need to become more flexible and will be conducted in close liaison with a wide range of actors.

Project funding that targets specific issues further complements the Federal Foreign Office's humanitarian assistance portfolio.

## Partnerships

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In order to cope with the increasingly challenging contexts, the Federal Foreign Office relies on experienced and efficient partner organisations. Rather than implementing its own projects, the Federal Foreign Office funds projects of its partners. In doing so, it sets high standards for the quality and design of humanitarian projects. The Federal Foreign Office may also support the building of the necessary capacities and expertise of humanitarian workers and organisations. Funding decisions take into account the Federal Foreign Office's strategic interests and focal areas of its humanitarian assistance.

The Federal Foreign Office takes into account the specific added value of the individual partners and groups of partners:

- **UN:** Leadership role in coordination, systemic advantage through size, infrastructure, performance, special mandates;
- **NGOs:** Represent diversity of civil society, proximity to the population, local presence often well-established through local partner organisations;
- **International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:** Good access due to firmly established National Societies, operating within an international network, mandate based on international humanitarian law;
- **National-government-sponsored organisations such as the THW:** Technical capacity for rapid deployment throughout the world.



The Federal Foreign Office promotes dialogue and transparency with and among its partners. This includes regular discussions in the *Humanitarian Assistance Coordinating Committee*, which is made up of the Federal Foreign Office, German humanitarian organisations, other organisations and institutions active in humanitarian assistance, as well as other ministries. The *Humanitarian Assistance Coordinating Committee* strengthens the coherence of German humanitarian assistance and has proven its worth as an information-sharing and coordination body in various severe emergencies. The active involvement of German humanitarian agencies helps to raise the awareness of issues related to humanitarian assistance among German civil society. Furthermore, the Federal Foreign Office urges and supports German organisations to contribute to the coordination of the international humanitarian system and its further development.

The *Bundestag* (German parliament) *Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid* is the central parliamentary forum for the discussion of issues related to Germany's humanitarian assistance. As part of her duties, the *Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid* at the Federal Foreign Office liaises with humanitarian organisations and institutions.

## Quality assurance and compliance

In the context of quality assurance, the Federal Foreign Office promotes international initiatives that enhance the humanitarian system and the quality of humanitarian assistance. A focal area in this respect is the support and dissemination of the *Sphere Handbook* and the *CHS*. The Federal Foreign Office uses these technical standards and indicators on quality assurance for the effective implementation of the funded projects. In addition, the Federal Foreign Office supports innovative initiatives as well as training on specific issues regarding standards and quality in humanitarian assistance, both for partners in Germany and on the ground.

NGO partners have to undergo a preliminary assessment (so-called *quality profile*) in order to ensure that they meet the administrative and qualitative prerequisites for possible funding. They are assessed by international standards and review mechanisms. Among other criteria, their financial and administrative capacities are evaluated, their international connections and involvement in the humanitarian system are reviewed, and their technical expertise and regional presence and priorities are assessed. Not only

are the necessary funding conditions reviewed on the basis of these quality profiles, but partnership-based cooperation and thematic exchange are also fostered. The findings of this assessment impact the cooperation with the partner organisation. In addition to meeting its obligation to review an organisation's solvency, the Federal Foreign Office's findings also provide guidance on the organisations' strengths and thus help to define the cooperation. This qualification process is constantly reviewed, expanded and adapted to current international developments, thereby advancing harmonisation of assessments by various donors and establishing new processes such as the *CHS* and new standards.

The Federal Foreign Office attaches great importance to the adequate assessment of corruption risks by its partners and the thorough investigation of irregularities in humanitarian projects. Beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance must by all means be protected from ethical misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. This especially applies to contexts which are particularly prone to the abuse of power by humanitarian workers. To this end, the Federal Foreign Office expects its partners to apply internationally recognized standards of protection, such as the IASC's *Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)*. These include prevention mechanisms and codes of conduct for employees. Those who report misconduct will not automatically be blacklisted. Reported cases of misconduct must be investigated in a comprehensive and transparent manner and perpetrators must be held accountable. These requirements do also apply to partner organisations in the field and implementation must be guaranteed.

## Local presence

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In order to ensure the regular and required context, conflict and risk analysis, the input of German missions abroad is indispensable and the further set-up and expansion of a network of humanitarian experts in the missions is crucial. A well-established local presence facilitates the coordination with other donors, humanitarian partners and the local government. Active engagement in the Advisory Boards of CBPFs and other working groups at field level, as well as local advocacy work, also necessitate an enhanced local presence. Constant monitoring of the projects on the ground is a further crucial step in regards to assessing and improving the quality of individual projects and their follow-up measures.

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## Reporting and institutional learning

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The accountability on the effectiveness of projects funded by the Federal Foreign Office with public funds is of particular importance. Such accountability should also extend to affected populations. They should be involved in relevant decision-making processes at all stages of the programme cycle. Older people and people with disabilities or reduced mobility should also be able to voice their needs. Transparency and effective complaints mechanisms that are accessible to everyone are vital and humanitarian programmes must be adjusted on the basis of feedback received from those affected. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms pay particular attention to this aspect.

The Federal Foreign Office's concept on monitoring and evaluating humanitarian assistance is based on international standards<sup>3</sup> for a systematic, accompanying and final assessment regarding the achievement of objectives, effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the supported actions. It takes into account the specific features of humanitarian assistance in crisis and disaster contexts. Evaluations provide information on the extent to which the humanitarian assistance financed by the Federal Foreign Office has achieved its objectives, what the added value of Germany's contribution was, whether funding was needs-based, and how donors and grant recipients can learn for the future from previous experiences. The Federal Foreign Office provides funding for the evaluation of individual projects and also commissions cross-project evaluations of German humanitarian assistance. It also regularly conducts monitoring visits to oversee funded projects, and to review their progress. It does so in compliance with the *Federal Budget Code*, which imposes comprehensive obligations to monitor the funded projects and programmes.

The Federal Foreign Office supports the *International Aid Transparency Initiative's (IATI)* transparency obligations. Funding is registered and published in the OCHA *Financial Tracking Service (FTS)* via the EU's EDRIS system. As a member of the *Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative*, the Federal Foreign Office also supports endeavours on transparent reporting.

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3 OECD DAC evaluation criteria and the *ALNAP Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide*.

## Public relations

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Along with its humanitarian partners, the Federal Foreign Office is constantly expanding its public relations work and regularly publishes both news and background information on humanitarian assistance.

## Innovation

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Technological development provides great opportunities for humanitarian action. The Federal Foreign Office promotes innovation by its partners and funds projects to this end. Its concept of innovations is not limited to the technological field, but also includes the renewal of structural processes. The Federal Foreign Office shares its partners' risks regarding the development of innovative approaches and provides support, for example through funding, where necessary, in the innovation process and in integrating innovative approaches into structures and procedures. It encourages its partners to improve the efficiency of their work and to actively look for possibilities to innovate. It also supports the competition of relevant ideas.





*UN headquarters in New York (2018) © Kevin Hagen*

## 8. Interaction with other policy areas

In an increasingly interconnected world that is characterised by fragility, crises and the ever more tangible effects of climate change, no policy field can be viewed in isolation. Particular attention must be paid to the creation and utilisation of synergy effects.

Taking into account the primacy of needs-orientation and the humanitarian principles, humanitarian assistance can in many cases play a role in crisis prevention, crisis management, stabilisation and post-conflict peacebuilding. In combination with development cooperation instruments, it can also help in achieving the *Sustainable Development Goals*, including the pledge to *leave no one behind*. Humanitarian assistance should always build on the coping strategies of those affected and must not ignore the long-term effects of ongoing activities.

At the same time, non-humanitarian actors must take on a far more active role in their respective fields in order to prevent the emergence and growth of humanitarian crises, to reduce humanitarian needs and dependence on assistance, and to resolve emergencies as quickly as possible. This has been reaffirmed at the *World Humanitarian Summit* in 2016 and applies especially to development actors. They should increasingly and quicker become involved in fragile contexts to identify and commence activities suited to promote development, such as capacity-building of local, regional and national institutions, as early as possible. The aim is to systematically coordinate the various instruments of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation and to deploy them in a complementary and coherent manner in accordance with their respective mandate, intervention logic and objectives.

Humanitarian needs should ideally not arise at all. The emergence of crises should be prevented, where possible, and solutions should be developed early on to reduce humanitarian needs and preserve socio-economic conditions conducive for development. The Federal Foreign Office strongly supports this paradigm shift which originates from the *World Humanitarian Summit* and which mandates all instruments within the so called *Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus* to be coordinated and interlinked as well and as early as possible. To achieve this, continuous dialogue and exchange of information between all relevant stakeholders is of utmost importance. Accordingly, the Federal Government pledged to conduct joint analysis and joint-up planning for crisis contexts wherever possible. Consequently the Federal Foreign Office works with its partners to ensure that the *Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus* is implemented pragmatically and effectively with due regard to local conditions.

Humanitarian assistance is also closely related to climate and environmental policy. Climate change, the destruction of the natural environment, and the overuse of natural resources have a significant impact on the magnitude, frequency and potential damage of extreme weather events. Complex political crises can be exacerbated by the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation. The humanitarian impact of natural disasters is particularly severe in fragile states. The Federal Foreign Office's humanitarian assistance seeks to ensure that the humanitarian dimension of climate change receives the necessary attention in relevant international processes, including the implementation of the *Paris Climate Agreement*, and is integrated into relevant policy areas and fields of action. A good example of this is the improved protection of people who have been displaced by the effects of climate change.

Humanitarian assistance is also an important component of the comprehensive German approach to forced migration and displacement. In addition to providing humanitarian and development assistance, Germany significantly contributes to more equal international responsibility-sharing by hosting refugees. The Federal Government regards *resettlement* to Germany and hosting refugees for humanitarian reasons as vital instruments that complement its efforts abroad to protect particularly vulnerable displaced persons.

Military resources are only deployed to support humanitarian activities as a last resort, that is, when non-military means and capacities are not able to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance. In such cases, the deployment of military resources is based on the *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines)* and the *Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines)*.

Humanitarian assistance also overlaps with civil protection and disaster assistance, areas in which many German partner organisations are active. State-funded civil protection and disaster-assistance assets and expertise are used in some humanitarian emergencies. Accordingly, technical assistance abroad is legally defined as a task of the THW, which runs a deployment system comprising certified units and modules that meet international quality criteria.







*Distribution of aid packages in Raqqa, Syria (2017) © Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V.*

## 9. Implementation and follow-up

The strategy will serve as a framework for the Federal Foreign Office's humanitarian assistance 2019 – 2023. To implement it, the Federal Foreign Office uses a wide range of approaches, including financing projects and programmes, funding the work of international organisations, donor coordination, *humanitarian diplomacy*, supporting German staff in international organisations, information campaigns and public relations.

The strategy forms the basis for the continuous exchange between the Federal Foreign Office and its partners in Germany and abroad. Partners whose activities are financed from the humanitarian assistance budget must be committed to play a part in the implementation of this strategy.

Implementing the strategy in practice involves, among other things:

- Informing on its content and diffusing it (in German and English) at missions abroad, to partners, other institutions and the public;
- Adapting or supplementing internal working documents and guidelines to its core areas (where necessary);
- Including its core aspects in regular consultations with important partners, on the agenda of the annual meeting of the *Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Committee* and as part of the Federal Government's report on German humanitarian assistance abroad;
- Reaching out to the public through public relations activities related to the strategy. The document is to be used to increase the understanding of and the support for the core concerns of humanitarian assistance among both the public and decision-makers.

As part of its accountability efforts and continuous institutional learning, the Federal Foreign Office plans to systematically review at least one part of the strategy each year. This analysis can address current issues in particular countries or contexts and, where appropriate, lead to further measures aimed at improving the quality of humanitarian assistance, such as further trainings or more in-depth studies in specific fields. At the end of the strategy's five-year timeline, a comprehensive formal evaluation will gather lessons learnt and allow the Federal Foreign Office to draw conclusions for the future.

## Priorities of the Federal Foreign Office

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The Federal Foreign Office has defined three concrete topics, which it will develop further and advocate for in the coming years.

### Improving humanitarian access for humanitarian workers and to those in need

First and foremost, humanitarian assistance and humanitarian organisations need access to the affected population in crises and conflicts. In practice however, this is often not guaranteed. As the need for humanitarian assistance is almost always greatest where people have no or insufficient access to humanitarian assistance, the Federal Foreign Office will focus in particular on improving humanitarian access.

Alongside the political commitment to ensure that humanitarian principles and IHL are respected, humanitarian organisations must enhance their abilities to obtain access to people in need by engaging in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders (through *humanitarian diplomacy*).

The Federal Foreign Office regards established instruments, such as those used in humanitarian logistics, for instance the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and new mechanisms like the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM) for cross-border relief shipments especially from Turkey to Syria, as well as the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM), as increasingly important. They contribute to improving humanitarian access in areas where intensive armed hostilities are ongoing and also support other stakeholders by providing essential supplies to the population.

So-called *remote management* of humanitarian measures is already standard in many high-risk contexts. This creates significant demands for humanitarian organisations to adequately involve those affected, analysing and assessing their needs correctly, designing assistance measures properly and dealing appropriately with the risks involved in achieving the aims and making correct use of funding.

Local stakeholders often have an advantage in terms of access to the affected population. At the same time, they are confronted with the risks that arise for operations in fragile contexts. The Federal Foreign Office recognises the need to apply new management instruments and procedures for such contexts. Donors as well as international and local humanitarian organisations must do more to discuss the risks and address them together.

Not all humanitarian organisations can afford comprehensive safety management systems. Therefore, activities are often not carried out where the needs are greatest, but rather where access is easier. In recent years, organisations have made efforts to remedy this and to pool their capabilities regarding context and risk analysis. The Federal Foreign Office will support the systematic expansion of such activities.

**As part of its humanitarian assistance, the Federal Foreign Office will address the subject of 'improving humanitarian access' especially in three areas:**

Providing support for humanitarian logistics, including the transport of humanitarian personnel and goods	Humanitarian logistical instruments such as UNHAS as well as new mechanisms for improved operability will be supported.
Promoting the capacity of humanitarian organisations to improve access to affected people through <i>humanitarian diplomacy</i> and <i>remote management</i>	The intention is to provide support by promoting the mutual exchange between donors and humanitarian organisations as well as training possibilities for humanitarian staff.
Facilitating and financing practical measures for the protection of humanitarian workers, including local stakeholders	This will be achieved, inter alia, by providing financial support to organisations that advise humanitarian organisations on issues of security, access or contextual analysis, such as the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO), by supporting initiatives to improve local actors' access and through the involvement of (local) humanitarian organisations in actions and analyses of UN agencies.

## Innovation

For the Federal Foreign Office, innovations are crucial to better cope with current and future challenges for humanitarian assistance. It is committed to introduce innovations as an ongoing feature in the thinking as well as the actions of humanitarian stakeholders and aims to actively promote this. The aim is to constantly and systematically search for new solutions, to develop major innovative improvements for the affected people, and to apply the new approaches and products in the humanitarian practice.

Even with the increased attention that this topic has received recently, many questions as to how innovations improve humanitarian action in practice remain unanswered. The Federal Foreign Office thus supports goals that lead to an improved understanding of good practice in innovation management. At the same time, it promotes the use and dissemination of internationally developed procedures to identify and apply innovations. One focus will be on promoting local innovations.

As a donor, the Federal Foreign Office's role will not be that of a sponsor of isolated innovative projects. Rather, it will support actions and actors that facilitate the exchange of innovation practices and create a culture of innovation. It therefore explicitly welcomes the joining up of different actors such as research institutions, local stakeholders and humanitarian partners. It also welcomes humanitarian efforts by local and by 'new' stakeholders, particularly those from the private sector.

The *WFP Innovation Accelerator*, jointly funded by the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Bavarian State Government, demonstrates how new ideas, that pursue a specific objective, can be translated into concrete innovative practice. Similar instruments and approaches should also be implemented on the ground, together with the affected people, local humanitarian staff, local entrepreneurs and local research institutions.

**The Federal Foreign Office will promote innovation in the following priority areas:**

<p>Encouraging the use of innovations that have emerged from the interaction of different stakeholders</p>	<p>These can be innovative approaches to building networks of science, business, political and humanitarian actors, who develop common ideas for improving humanitarian assistance and who work on their implementation together.</p> <p>Local and international actors should also be linked increasingly to jointly develop their ideas and solutions.</p>
<p>Promoting innovations in the priority areas of German humanitarian assistance</p>	<p>Examples include anticipatory humanitarian assistance, innovative ways to improve access to affected people and the use of block-chain technology in humanitarian assistance.</p>

## Forgotten crises

A significant share of humanitarian needs is found in the large number of humanitarian crises situations that are scarcely noticed by the public or the media. In such crises, often a certain *donor fatigue* of state and private donors sets in. Humanitarian organisations that are active in these contexts struggle to cope with insufficient funding prospects and are often forced to make difficult decisions that are detrimental to the extent of assistance they provide. A vicious cycle develops: due to the lack of media attention, the political interest to resolve the root causes of the crisis often declines, too.

The phenomenon of *forgotten crises* does not comply with the primacy of needs orientation in humanitarian assistance. The Federal Foreign Office will thus further increase its current commitment to advocate for forgotten humanitarian crises.

**The Federal Foreign Office will pursue the following activities regarding forgotten crises:**

Systematic observation and analysis of humanitarian contexts in regards to forgotten and neglected crises, while considering in particular humanitarian needs in specific regions and of marginalized groups respectively

The Federal Foreign Office will strengthen its internal analytical capacities regarding humanitarian assistance, also through close cooperation with German missions worldwide.

Furthermore the Federal Foreign Office will increase the use of analytical tools like INFORM or the *Forgotten Crises Assessment*.

Raising the issue of forgotten crises in the dialogue with external partners

At annual strategy discussions with its international and national humanitarian partners, the Federal Foreign Office will address the forgotten crises where the respective partners operate or which require more attention.

Continuation of public relations and work in relevant fora

The Federal Foreign Office will support current and new advocacy campaigns of its partners such as the *#nichtvergessener* initiative.

The Federal Foreign Office will increasingly include the topic of forgotten crises in its publications related to humanitarian assistance and in its internal communication.





# Appendices

## Appendix I: List of abbreviations

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ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
CBPF	Country-Based Pooled Fund
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
COHAFA	Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EDRIS	European Emergency Disaster Response Information System
EMC	European Medical Corps
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
EU	European Union
FbF	Forecast-based Financing
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
INSO	International NGO Safety Organisation
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
THW	Federal Agency for Technical Relief (Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk)
UN	United Nations
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMM	United Nations Monitoring Mechanism
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNVIM	United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

## Appendix II: Photo Directory

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Page 2	Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs © Thomas Imo/photothek.net
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## Appendix III: Sector strategies of the Federal Foreign Office

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- Federal Foreign Office Humanitarian Assistance Strategy in Situations of Flight and Displacement
- Federal Foreign Office Strategy for Humanitarian Mine Action in the Context of Humanitarian Assistance provided by the German Federal Government (*coming soon*)
- Dealing with Forgotten Crisis in Humanitarian Assistance. Concept of the German Federal Foreign Office (*German only*)
- Federal Foreign Office Strategy for Humanitarian Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- Federal Foreign Office Strategy on Humanitarian Assistance in the Context of Climate Change (*German only*)





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