



MOPAN 2015-16 Assessments

**United Nations Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
(UNOCHA)**

Executive Summary

Executive summary

This institutional assessment of UNOCHA covers the period from 2014 to mid-2016. Applying the MOPAN 3.0 methodology, the assessment considers organisational systems, practices and behaviours, as well as the results UNOCHA achieves. The assessment considers five performance areas: four relate to organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management and performance management) and the fifth relates to development effectiveness (results). It assesses UNOCHA's performance against a framework of key indicators and associated micro-indicators that comprise the standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. The assessment also provides an overview of its performance trajectory. This is the first MOPAN assessment of UNOCHA.

Context

UNOCHA

- It is an entity within the UN Secretariat that supports the mobilisation, funding, co-ordination and policy setting of humanitarian action in response to emergencies
- It has a mandate for advocacy and co-ordinating the humanitarian system, rather than operational activity
- It does not have an executive board, but is directly accountable to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly
- It works towards a vision of a world where *"people are better able to withstand shocks: governments are aware of risks, are well prepared and able to respond to disasters quickly and effectively; and international assistance is provided quickly, efficiently and appropriately"*
- It is 95% dependent on voluntary contributions from Member States and the European Commission
- It commissioned and conducted a 'root and branch' functional review of its internal structures, resources and capacities in 2016

Organisation at a glance

- Established in 1998
- Expenditure: USD 334 million (2015)
- Active in 37 countries (2015)
- Over 2 300 staff
- Operates through:
 - New York and Geneva headquarters
 - 6 regional offices
 - 29 field offices
 - 20 Humanitarian Advisory Teams

Overall performance

The 2016 MOPAN 3.0 assessment finds overall that the strategic relevance of UNOCHA is unquestioned. Its role is increasingly important given expanding humanitarian needs. However, in terms of its systems, practices and behaviours, UNOCHA does not yet meet the requirements of an effective multilateral organisation.

UNOCHA is strategically positioned in relation to the Security Council, and demand for its services is increasing. It possesses a range of potentially valuable assets and comparative advantages to serve the humanitarian community. It has deployed these effectively in many areas, driving the humanitarian effectiveness agenda, leading humanitarian advocacy, and raising financing for the humanitarian community. It has deepened and expanded the humanitarian discourse, and used its convening power and its political intelligence to inform high-level debate. These assets serve a critical function within the humanitarian architecture.

However, the value of UNOCHA's activities is currently constrained by organisational weaknesses including the lack of a clear and cohesive management vision, conducting work in silos and communication

blockages. Activities are not geared to a common strategic direction and lack coherence and prioritisation. UNOCHA's political co-ordination and policy analysis work are not currently maximised to best effect, and the organisation suffers from weak accountability systems. Because of these systemic shortcomings, the 'sum' of UNOCHA's activities is currently somewhat less than its parts.

The balance between UNOCHA's potential roles — as a technical co-ordinator and/or an enabler, solutions broker, convenor, modeller, knowledge provider or intellectual leader within the humanitarian system — is not yet confirmed. To fully realise its potential, UNOCHA requires significant structural reform. The 2016 Functional Review provides a window of opportunity for change, although procedures for its follow up are not yet clear. Swift action will be needed, both to address UNOCHA's internal constraints and to restore external confidence.

Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths

- **Prioritisation of relevance**, through context analysis which has enabled the humanitarian community to come together and take difficult political decisions and implement reforms
- **Knowledge generation**, which has provided a platform for dialogue, influenced the humanitarian agenda and informed international-level advocacy
- **External co-ordination**, including contributions to major international groups and managing major events
- **Systems building**, including improvements in the humanitarian architecture
- **External accountability**, with improvements in the accountability and learning of the wider humanitarian system

Areas for improvement

- **Function**: core functions not yet clearly defined and undermined by the lack of a clear and cohesive management vision
- **Form**: an organisational structure and operating model that require reform to be fit for purpose
- **Internal accountability systems and culture**: improvements needed to the performance culture and management systems
- **Prioritisation and sequencing**: critical areas of activity and associated criteria for resource allocation need to be defined and geared to a strong vision of the future
- **Cross-cutting issues**: a clear definition of protection needed as well as greater cross-organisational ownership on gender, and a stronger focus on environmental sustainability and governance issues