

HMDC Presents... SOCHUM: Full Report

HMDC Presents... Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM): Role of Non-Governmental Organizations, Foreign Aid and Local Institutions (Research Report, December 2026)

Prepared for HMDC Forensics delegates attending Harvard Model United Nations Online, December 5-6, 2026. Every fact below comes from a page that was opened and read in October 2026. Each evidence entry repeats its publication and date so the source is always visible.

WHAT OUR CHAIRS WILL FOCUS ON

Harvard explains that this SOCHUM topic is about foreign aid: money and help that rich countries send to poorer ones, and how that help can build lasting growth without making a country depend on it or lose control of its own choices. The October session looked at the UN and other international organizations, but our December session turns to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Our chairs will ask us how NGOs and other humanitarian groups can help communities while also making local institutions stronger, such as local governments, hospitals and community groups. By the end, we will be asked to build a framework for international development, one that "promotes efficiency and sustainability."

Harvard Model United Nations, HMUN Online Committee Page, Last Accessed: October 2026

<https://www.harvardmun.org/sochum-online>

The parts of this report that match this focus most closely are the Introduction, Part 1B (Localization), Part 1C (Pooled Funds), Part 1F (Working Through National Governments and Institutions), Part 3A (Humanitarian Reform Agreements) and Part 3B (Development Effectiveness Standards).

How we use this report: Harvard's focus is on long-term development and on NGOs making local institutions stronger, while much of this report describes emergencies, such as aid cuts, famine risk and attacks on aid workers. We put localization, pooled funds, national institutions and the Paris Declaration first, because these answer Harvard's question of how help can last and avoid dependency. We treat the numbers in Part 1A, the aid-worker safety material in Part 2D and the counterterrorism rules in Part 3C as background that explains why the problem is urgent, not as the centre of our speeches or resolutions. When we write our framework, we also make sure it says how a country will one day need less outside help, because that is the word "sustainable" in Harvard's summary.

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INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING THE TOPIC

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a group that is not part of any government and is usually not run for profit. Some NGOs are huge international charities with thousands of staff. Others are small local groups run by volunteers in a single town. NGOs deliver a large share of the world's humanitarian aid (help in emergencies) and development aid (help that builds schools, clinics and economies over many years).

This topic asks three linked questions. First, who should get foreign aid money: large international NGOs, small local NGOs, UN agencies, or national governments? Second, how should NGOs relate to the local institutions of the country where they work, including governments, courts, hospitals and community groups? Third, how should governments regulate NGOs, especially those that receive money from abroad, without crushing legitimate work?

The topic is urgent in 2026. In 2025 donor governments made the deepest aid cuts in history, while needs stayed near record levels. At the same time, more governments passed laws limiting NGOs, and attacks on aid workers reached record numbers. SOCHUM delegates will need to decide how the world should share the work of helping people in crisis when the money is shrinking.

PART 1, THE TOPIC

1A. THE HARMS

OECD, April 2026: Official development assistance falls 23.1 percent

Tagline: Recording the largest aid drop

Source: According to... OECD, April 2026

Link: <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/news/press-releases/2026/04/international-aid-fell-sharply-in-2025-says-oecd.html>

Fact: It states... Preliminary data show that official development assistance (government aid) from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee members and associates fell by 23.1 percent in real terms in 2025 compared with 2024. The OECD calls this the largest one-year drop in the history of official development assistance.

This means... NGOs that depend on government grants are losing money faster than at any time before. Delegates must decide whether the answer is to raise more money, to spend the remaining money differently, or both.

OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2026, December 2025: 239 million people need help

Tagline: Measuring need against money

Source: According to... OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview 2026, December 2025

Link: <https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2026/article/glance-17>

Fact: It states... When the 2026 plan was launched in December 2025, about 239 million people needed humanitarian help. The UN and its partners planned to reach 135 million of them and asked for 33 billion US dollars. They also set a smaller "prioritized" plan to reach 87 million people for 23 billion dollars.

This means... The UN is now openly choosing which people to help first, because it expects not to receive enough money for everyone. NGOs that carry out these plans must cut people from their lists, and delegates must decide who should make those choices.

UN News, October 15, 2025: The World Food Programme loses about 40 percent of its money

Tagline: Cutting food aid by 40 percent

Source: According to... UN News, October 15, 2025

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/10/1166112>

Fact: It states... The World Food Programme expected about 40 percent less money in 2025, with a budget of about 6.4 billion dollars compared with 10 billion in 2024. Nearly 14 million people it was feeding could fall into emergency-level hunger. In Somalia, help fell from 2.2 million people to 350,000, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo planned help for 2.3 million people was cut to 600,000.

This means... UN agencies deliver much of their food through NGO partners, so UN cuts become NGO cuts on the ground. Any resolution on NGOs must deal with the fact that the whole delivery chain is shrinking.

World Food Programme, September 12, 2023: Each 1 percent cut pushes 400,000 people toward starvation

Tagline: Linking cuts to hunger

Source: According to... World Food Programme, September 12, 2023

Link: <https://www.wfp.org/news/new-wfp-analysis-shows-every-1-cut-food-assistance-pushes-400000-people-emergency-hunger>

Fact: It states... A WFP analysis estimated that every 1 percent cut in food assistance could push more than 400,000 people into emergency hunger. WFP noted that its model works at regional and global level, not for single countries, and that the link between cuts and hunger is not a straight line.

This means... Delegates can use this to show that aid cuts carry a human cost that can be estimated. Delegates should also note the study's own limits before using the number as an exact prediction.

Council on Foreign Relations, December 23, 2025: 25 million fewer people received aid in 2025

Tagline: Counting people left without aid

Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, December 23, 2025

Link: <https://cfr.org/articles/great-aid-recession-2025s-humanitarian-crash-nine-charts>

Fact: It states... About 25 million fewer people received humanitarian aid in 2025, even though needs stayed almost the same. Two famines were declared in 2025. The United States had supplied nearly 40 percent of all humanitarian funding, so its cuts hit hard. WFP halved monthly food rations for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, from 12.50 dollars to 6 dollars per person.

This means... The system depended heavily on a single donor. Delegates may propose ways to spread funding across more countries and private donors so that one government's decision cannot collapse aid worldwide.

UN Women, May 13, 2025: Half of women's organizations in crises may close

Tagline: Closing women-led local organizations

Source: According to... UN Women, May 13, 2025

Link: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2025/05/new-survey-shows-half-of-womens-organizations-aiding-women-in-crisis-may-shut-down-in-six-months-due-to-global-aid-cuts>

Fact: It states... A survey of 411 women-led and women's rights organizations in 44 crisis settings found that 90 percent had been hit by funding cuts. 72 percent had laid off staff, 51 percent had suspended programs (including help for survivors of gender-based violence), and 47 percent expected to close within six months.

This means... Local organizations, especially those led by women, are the most fragile part of the aid system. If they close, the local knowledge and trust they built may be lost for years, which weakens any plan to "localize" aid.

UN News, August 19, 2025: A record 383 aid workers were killed in 2024

Tagline: Killing record numbers of aid workers

Source: According to... UN News, August 19, 2025

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165678>

Fact: It states... A record 383 aid workers were killed in 2024, most of them national staff serving their own communities. 181 were killed in Gaza and 60 in Sudan. By mid-August 2025, another 265 had been killed, according to provisional data.

This means... Local staff of NGOs carry most of the physical danger in humanitarian work. Shifting more work to local organizations also shifts more risk to them, so delegates must pair localization with protection and security funding.

UN News, December 29, 2022: The Taliban ban women from working for NGOs

Tagline: Banning women from NGO work

Source: According to... UN News, December 29, 2022

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1132082>

Fact: It states... Afghanistan's Taliban authorities ordered women to stop working for NGOs. UN and aid leaders said this had "immediate life-threatening consequences," because female staff are the ones who can reach women and girls. At the time more than 28 million Afghans needed help, and more than 500 women worked with UNHCR's NGO partners, serving nearly one million women and girls.

This means... Local authorities can decide whether NGOs are able to work at all. Delegates must decide when NGOs should keep working under harsh local rules and when they should refuse.

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 9, 2026: Humanitarian aid falls by more than a third

Tagline: Measuring the humanitarian aid collapse

Source: According to... Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 9, 2026

Link: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/whats-new/huge-drop-in-global-aid-deeply-concerned-said-minister-of-international-development/id3155863>

Fact: It states... Citing OECD figures, total government aid from OECD donor countries fell 23.1 percent in 2025 to 174.3 billion dollars. The United States caused 75.1 percent of the total drop after its own aid fell 56.9 percent, and Germany (29.1 billion dollars) became the largest donor for the first time, just ahead of the United States (29 billion dollars). Humanitarian aid fell 35.8 percent, to 15.5 billion dollars. The OECD expects aid to fall another 5.8 percent in 2026. Only Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark met the UN target of giving 0.7 percent of national income.

This means... Emergency aid, the money NGOs use in crises, fell even faster than aid overall, and the fall is expected to continue. Delegates can use these figures to argue that cuts are not temporary and that the system must be redesigned for less money, not simply wait for donors to return.

NPR (via WHYY), July 3, 2025: A study links aid cuts to millions of deaths

Tagline: Estimating the human cost of cuts

Source: According to... NPR (via WHYY), July 3, 2025

Link: <https://whyy.org/npr-story/study-14-million-lives-could-be-lost-due-to-trump-aid-cuts>

Fact: It states... A study in the medical journal The Lancet looked at 133 countries from 2001 to 2021 and found that high USAID funding was linked to a 15 percent drop in deaths from all causes and a 32 percent drop in deaths of children under five, or about 91 million deaths prevented. If the cuts become permanent, the researchers estimate 8 to 19 million extra deaths by 2030, with 14 million as the central estimate, including 4.5 million children. An outside expert praised the method but warned that weak death records add uncertainty, and a US official disputed the study.

This means... Aid delivered through NGOs and local health systems saves lives on a very large scale, so cutting it has a measurable cost. Delegates can cite the central estimate while noting the range and the criticism, which shows careful use of evidence.

UN Women, July 10, 2026: At least one million women and girls lose critical support

Tagline: Measuring the collapse of women's organizations

Source: According to... UN Women, July 10, 2026

Link: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2026/07/at-least-one-million-women-and-girls-lose-access-to-critical-support>

Fact: It states... A UN Women report based on 855 women-led and women's rights organizations in 52 crisis-affected and conflict-affected countries found that at least one million women and girls have lost access to critical support since January 2025. 84 percent of the organizations said demand for their services has grown, nearly nine in ten can no longer meet the need, and two in five expect to shut down, for a time or permanently, within the next year. 65 percent of women-led organizations have staff working without pay, and 63 percent have already cut services in remote areas.

This means... The warning from May 2025 (above) has come true on a large scale one year later. Delegates can argue that local women's groups need protected, direct funding, because when they close, the women and girls who depend on them often have nowhere else to turn.

UN News, August 19, 2026: 350 aid workers were killed in 2025, the second-highest toll on record

Tagline: Counting aid worker deaths in 2025

Source: According to... UN News, August 19, 2026

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/08/1168153>

Fact: It states... On World Humanitarian Day, the UN aid coordination office (OCHA) reported that 907 aid workers were victims of violence in 2025 and 350 were killed, the second-highest toll ever recorded. Gaza was the deadliest place for aid workers for the third year in a row, with 186 killed, and Sudan had a record 71 killed. By August 2026 another 82 aid workers had been killed that year. Armed drones caused 80 percent of civilian deaths in Sudan in the first four months of 2026, and UN relief chief Tom Fletcher said more than 1,000 aid workers had been killed in just three years.

This means... The danger did not end after the record year of 2024 described above. New weapons such as cheap armed drones make aid work even riskier, so delegates may call for protections that cover drone attacks and for real consequences for anyone who attacks aid workers.

1B. MAJOR SOLUTION 1: LOCALIZATION (FUNDING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTLY)

Localization means giving local and national organizations more money, more decision-making power and a bigger role in aid. Supporters argue that local groups already know the language, culture and needs, stay after international groups leave, and cost less. Critics worry about fraud, weak accounting systems, and the chance that money goes to well-connected local elites.

Advantages: Local groups are often faster and cheaper, and they keep working when international staff leave. Money spent locally also builds local skills and institutions.

Disadvantages: Donor rules on accounting and reporting are hard for small groups to meet. Local groups also take on more physical danger and may face pressure from local authorities.

ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2026, September 10, 2026: Only 4.3 percent of aid goes directly to local actors

Tagline: Measuring direct local funding

Source: According to... ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2026, September 10, 2026

Link: <https://alnap.org/help-library/resources/sohs-2026/chapter-4-power-imbalances-and-improving-accountability/4-1-funding-pathways-and-the-politics-behind-the-numbers/>

Fact: It states... In 2025 only 8.7 percent of reported humanitarian funding reached local and national actors directly or indirectly, down from 9.5 percent in 2024. Direct funding rose a little, from 3.9 percent to 4.3 percent. One analysis estimated that local intermediaries could deliver programs about 32 percent more cost-efficiently than international ones.

This means... The world promised in 2016 to send at least 25 percent "as directly as possible" to local actors, and it is still far from that goal. Delegates can use the cost-efficiency figure to argue that localization saves money at a time of cuts.

OECD, June 10, 2025: Developing-country NGOs receive about 0.5 percent of aid to civil society

Tagline: Tracking aid through civil society

Source: According to... OECD, June 10, 2025

Link: [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD\(2025\)4/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD(2025)4/en/pdf)

Fact: It states... In 2023, donor governments sent about 27.6 billion dollars to and through civil society organizations, about 28 percent of their bilateral aid. About 64 percent went to international organizations and about 10 percent to organizations based in donor countries. Organizations based in developing countries received only about 0.1 billion dollars, around 0.5 percent, down from about 1.2 billion in 2014.

This means... Most aid "through NGOs" actually goes to large international NGOs, not to local groups in the countries being helped. This is the clearest data for any delegate arguing that the system bypasses local institutions.

Brookings Institution, December 1, 2022: Local groups get lower overhead and higher risk ratings

Tagline: Explaining barriers to local funding

Source: According to... Brookings Institution, December 1, 2022

Link: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rethinking-the-constraints-to-localization-of-foreign-aid/>

Fact: It states... Most local organizations working with USAID were limited to a 10 percent overhead rate (money for rent, accounting and staff training), while international partners usually received 20 to 40 percent. The author argues that claims about weak local capacity mostly reflect the donor's own systems, and that fraud risks exist with large international partners too.

This means... Even when donors say they want to fund local groups, their rules can keep those groups small. A resolution could ask donors to give local organizations fair overhead so they can build the systems donors demand.

UN News, February 3, 2024: Sudan's youth-led Emergency Response Rooms reach four million people

Tagline: Showing local responders at work

Source: According to... UN News, February 3, 2024

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146187>

Fact: It states... Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms are informal, community-led groups, many run by young volunteers. During the war they repaired power lines, opened evacuation routes, and provided food, water and protection. They have reached more than four million civilians and evacuated about 12,000 people. Volunteers asked the UN to recognize them as humanitarian actors.

This means... In some wars, local groups reach people that international NGOs cannot. Delegates must decide how to fund and protect informal groups that do not have the paperwork donors normally require.

Brookings Institution, February 25, 2025: Local partners describe the shock of the US aid freeze

Tagline: Hearing local partners on the aid freeze

Source: According to... Brookings Institution, February 25, 2025

Link: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/global-south-perspectives-on-us-development-assistance-changes-and-future-directions/>

Fact: It states... At a Brookings roundtable, partners from the Global South described the US aid freeze as a threat to human lives, to the survival of their organizations, and to trust in the United States and the whole development system. Some local groups had only recently become primary partners of USAID after building costly accounting and reporting systems to meet its rules, and they no longer had money to keep those systems running. Participants said many local organizations had moved from building solidarity to "just about keeping the lights on," which undercuts earlier progress toward localization.

This means... Localization depends on steady, predictable money. When a donor stops suddenly, the local groups that worked hardest to meet its rules can be hurt the most, so delegates may call for exit rules that give local partners warning and time to adjust.

1C. MAJOR SOLUTION 2: POOLED FUNDS MANAGED BY THE UN

A pooled fund collects money from many donors into one pot, managed in each country by the UN, which then gives grants to many NGOs, including small local ones.

Advantages: The UN carries the paperwork burden that small groups cannot, and donors share risk. Pooled funds have reached local groups far better than direct donor grants.

Disadvantages: The UN takes a role as middleman, which adds a layer of cost. Results vary greatly from country to country, and the funds depend on donors who are themselves cutting back.

OCHA, May 1, 2025: Nearly half of pooled funds reached local partners in 2024

Tagline: Sending half of pooled funds locally

Source: According to... OCHA, May 1, 2025

Link: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/country-based-pooled-funds-and-regional-humanitarian-pooled-funds-2024-review>

Fact: It states... In 2024, nearly half of all country-based pooled fund money went to local and national partners, almost double the system-wide target set in 2016. In Ukraine, almost 60 percent of the fund went to local and national partners. In 2024 new regional funds opened for Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Asia and the Pacific.

This means... Pooled funds are one of the few tools that have already met the localization target. Delegates looking for a proven, practical solution may propose expanding these funds.

Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, August 13, 2025: Pooled funds and cash to stretch smaller budgets

Tagline: Redesigning aid for less money

Source: According to... Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, August 13, 2025

Link: <https://sfs.georgetown.edu/news/the-future-of-foreign-aid-doing-less-with-less/>

Fact: It states... USAID officially closed on July 1, 2025, and its remaining programs moved into the State Department. US foreign aid fell to about 13 billion dollars, compared with an average of 51.4 billion dollars a year from 1946 to 2023. Jeremy Konyndyk, president of Refugees International, argued that humanitarians should expect one third to one half less money than before. He called UN agencies inefficient middlemen and urged pooled funds, similar to those used in global health by Gavi and the Global Fund, together with single, multi-purpose cash programs and a larger role for local leaders.

This means... Experts now argue that pooled funds and cash are the main tools for doing more with less. Delegates can link Solutions 1, 2 and 3 in one resolution: pooled money, delivered as cash, through local organizations.

Associated Press (via WTTW), December 29, 2025: The United States sends 2 billion dollars through one UN fund

Tagline: Channelling US aid through a UN pooled fund

Source: According to... Associated Press (via WTTW), December 29, 2025

Link: <https://news.wttw.com/2025/12/29/us-pledges-2-billion-un-humanitarian-aid-trump-slashes-funding-and-warns-agencies-adapt>

Fact: It states... The United States pledged 2 billion dollars for UN humanitarian aid, placed in an umbrella fund that OCHA controls and passes on to agencies, instead of scattered gifts to separate appeals. The money first targets 17 countries, including Bangladesh, Congo, Haiti, Syria and Ukraine, but not Afghanistan or the Palestinian territories. In return, the UN must merge humanitarian functions and cut overhead and duplication, and the State Department said agencies "will need to adapt, shrink, or die." US humanitarian funding for UN-backed programs had reached as high as 17 billion dollars a year in recent years.

This means... Even the donor that made the deepest cuts now prefers a pooled fund, but it attaches strict conditions and decides which countries are covered. Delegates must decide whether pooled funds should stay neutral and based only on need, or whether donors may set conditions on how the money is used.

UN News, October 2, 2026: The UN emergency fund releases 160 million dollars for 12 neglected crises

Tagline: Funding forgotten crises quickly

Source: According to... UN News, October 2, 2026

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/10/1168516>

Fact: It states... OCHA released 160 million dollars for 12 of the most underfunded crises, 150 million of it from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Yemen each receive 18 million dollars, Somalia and Sudan 16 million each, and South Sudan 15 million. Another 10 million dollars is set aside for people with disabilities, partly to strengthen local organizations of people with disabilities. CERF, created by the General Assembly in 2005, has channelled about 10.2 billion dollars to more than 117 countries and territories, but by October 2026 it had allocated only 483 million dollars that year against a yearly target of 1 billion. Tom Fletcher warned that "money alone won't get us there" unless leaders open access.

This means... A shared UN fund can send money to crises that single donors overlook, and it can carry some of that money to local groups. Delegates may call on more countries to give to CERF so it reaches its 1 billion dollar target, while also demanding open access so the money can actually be used.

1D. MAJOR SOLUTION 3: CASH ASSISTANCE

Instead of shipping food or goods, aid groups give people cash or vouchers to buy what they need in local markets.

Advantages: More of each dollar reaches the person in need, people choose what they need most, and local shops benefit. Electronic payments also lower the risk of theft.

Disadvantages: Cash does not work where markets have collapsed or prices are rising very fast. Some governments restrict cash programs, and people with disabilities, older people and migrants can be left out.

ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2026, September 10, 2026: Cash delivers more of each dollar than food aid

Tagline: Comparing cash with food aid

Source: According to... ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2026, September 10, 2026

Link: <https://alnapp.org/help-library/resources/sohs-2026/chapter-2-what-works-and-at-what-cost/2-2-cash/>

Fact: It states... Cash and vouchers made up about 21 percent of humanitarian aid in 2025, worth 7.3 billion dollars, but funding for cash fell 11 percent that year. On average 71 to 77 percent of a cash budget reached people directly, compared with 54 to 56 percent for food aid. In 14 settings, between 48 and 98 percent of people surveyed preferred cash. Progress on cash delivered by local groups has been slow.

This means... Cash is one of the most efficient ways to stretch a shrinking budget. Delegates can link cash with localization by asking that local organizations deliver more cash programs.

1E. MAJOR SOLUTION 4: PROTECTING THE LEGAL SPACE FOR NGOS

Many governments now limit NGOs, especially those funded from abroad. Some call these "foreign agent" laws. A solution here would set international standards on how governments may regulate NGOs.

Advantages: NGOs could work, report problems and speak up without fear of closure. Human rights groups and aid groups both depend on this freedom.

Disadvantages: Governments argue that they have a sovereign right to know who funds groups inside their borders and to block foreign political interference. Any resolution that limits national laws will face strong opposition.

ICNL, April 16, 2024: Foreign agent laws are used to close NGOs

Tagline: Spreading foreign agent laws

Source: According to... ICNL, April 16, 2024

Link: <https://www.icnl.org/post/report/foreign-influence-registration-laws-and-civil-society>

Fact: It states... Governments around the world are adopting "foreign influence" registration laws. Russia's 2012 law labeled non-profits as "foreign agents," and many closed or lost funding. In 2022 Nicaragua removed the legal registration of more than 150 organizations under its foreign agents law. Some established democracies have adopted similar laws, presented as protection against outside influence.

This means... The relationship between NGOs and local governments is a legal question, not only a funding question. Delegates from countries with such laws will defend them, and delegates from other countries will try to limit them.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2, 2015: Governments give several reasons for restricting NGOs

Tagline: Explaining why governments restrict NGOs

Source: According to... Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2, 2015

Link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2015/11/the-closing-space-challenge-how-are-funders-responding>

Fact: It states... By 2015, about two dozen countries had passed or were drafting limits on NGOs and foreign funding. Governments gave several reasons: preventing foreign political interference, protecting national security, enforcing paperwork rules, protecting public order, and fighting terrorism. Many funders responded by moving away from politically sensitive work toward basic service delivery.

This means... This older study explains the arguments delegates will hear in committee. Understanding these reasons helps delegates write compromises that answer real government concerns instead of dismissing them.

1F. MAJOR SOLUTION 5: WORKING THROUGH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

Some argue that aid should flow mainly through the governments of receiving countries, so that ministries, public hospitals and schools grow stronger instead of being replaced by NGOs.

Advantages: Public institutions remain after NGOs leave, and governments are accountable to their own citizens. This approach also respects national sovereignty.

Disadvantages: Some governments are corrupt, at war with part of their own population, or not recognized internationally. In those places, sending money through the government may help those causing the crisis.

Brookings Institution, January 21, 2025: Experts disagree on governments versus NGOs

Tagline: Weighing government against NGO channels

Source: According to... Brookings Institution, January 21, 2025

Link: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-stocktaking-on-locally-led-development-and-what-next/>

Fact: It states... At a roundtable of aid experts, some warned that funding local NGOs can create "parallel structures" that weaken governments. Others argued that funding governments undermines the ownership of local people and preferred core funding for civil society. USAID had set a goal of 25 percent of funding going directly to local organizations by 2025 but was "not on track." Participants also worried that local partners tend to be English-speaking elites.

This means... There is no single "local" partner: it can mean the government or local NGOs, and the two can compete. Delegates should be clear about which local institutions their resolution means to strengthen.

Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 8, 2026: Merging aid into foreign ministries can silence local voices

Tagline: Losing local voices in aid mergers

Source: According to... Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 8, 2026

Link: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-losing-local-voices-foreign-aid-diplomacy-mergers-threatens-national-security>

Fact: It states... Many donor countries have folded their aid agencies into their foreign ministries: New Zealand in 2009, Australia and Canada in 2013, the United Kingdom in 2020, and now the United States, which moved the remaining USAID programs into the State Department. After such mergers, local input and priorities are often pushed aside, and localization becomes scattered across the agency instead of being led by top-level policy. The authors argue that listening to local civil society still serves a donor's own national interest, because local groups understand the local situation and build long-term trust.

This means... The way donors organize their own governments shapes how much local institutions are heard. Delegates can ask donor countries to keep formal ways of consulting local organizations even when diplomats, rather than aid experts, manage the money.

ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog, July 11, 2024: Neutrality builds trust with all sides

Tagline: Balancing neutrality with local ties

Source: According to... ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog, July 11, 2024

Link: <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2024/07/11/principles-under-pressure-have-humanitarian-principles-really-stood-the-test-of-time/>

Fact: It states... The humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence are practical tools that help aid groups gain the trust of all parties in a conflict. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies must follow these principles while also acting as helpers to their own governments. The Lebanese Red Cross is an example of an organization that must balance both roles.

This means... When aid works closely with a government, the other side in a war may see aid workers as enemies. Delegates must protect the neutrality of aid even while strengthening local institutions.

1G. LESSER SOLUTIONS

- **Diversifying donors:** Encouraging more countries, private foundations and businesses to give, so that aid does not depend on one or two governments.
- **Fair overhead for local partners:** Requiring that international NGOs pass a fair share of overhead costs to local partners they fund.
- **Shared security funding:** Creating funds to train and insure local staff who face the most danger.
- **Joint reporting rules:** Asking donors to use one common report form so small NGOs are not overwhelmed with paperwork.
- **Early action funds:** Releasing money before a disaster peaks, based on weather or harvest forecasts.
- **Stronger complaint systems:** Giving people who receive aid safe ways to report abuse or fraud by any aid worker.

PART 2, THE UNITED NATIONS RECORD

2A. TABLE OF UN RESOLUTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS

Every symbol below was confirmed on an official UN site (un.org, digitallibrary.un.org or documents.un.org) in October 2026.

Symbol	Year	Body	What it does
UN Charter, Article 71	1945	UN founding treaty	Allows the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to make arrangements to consult with NGOs.
A/RES/46/182	1991	General Assembly	Creates the framework for coordinating UN emergency humanitarian assistance, the basis of today's system.

ECOSOC resolution 1996/31	1996	Economic and Social Council	Sets the rules for how NGOs gain, keep or lose consultative status at the UN.
A/RES/53/144	1998	General Assembly	Adopts the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, protecting the right of people and groups to promote human rights.
A/RES/69/313	2015	General Assembly	Adopts the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, including aid commitments.
A/RES/70/1	2015	General Assembly	Adopts the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for partnerships with civil society.
S/RES/2664 (2022)	2022	Security Council	Creates a humanitarian exemption so UN sanctions asset freezes do not block legitimate aid (adopted December 9, 2022).
HRC resolution 53/13 (A/HRC/RES/53/13)	2023	Human Rights Council	Addresses civil society space, including the right of groups to seek, receive and use funding.
S/RES/2730 (2024)	2024	Security Council	Calls on states to respect and protect UN and humanitarian personnel (adopted May 24, 2024).
A/RES/79/1	2024	General Assembly	Adopts the Pact for the Future, the UN's plan for reforming global cooperation (adopted without a vote on September 22, 2024).
A/RES/79/138	2024	General Assembly	Addresses the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of UN personnel.
A/RES/79/323	2025	General Assembly	Adopts the Sevilla Commitment on financing for development (adopted on August 25, 2025, by 158 votes to 2, with 1 abstention).

Verification links: - Charter Article 71: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-10> - A/RES/46/182: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/135197> - ECOSOC 1996/31: <https://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/about.htm> - A/RES/53/144: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/265855> - A/RES/69/313: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/801013> - A/RES/70/1: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3923923> - S/RES/2664 (2022): <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3997259> - HRC resolution 53/13: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4061481> (the report submitted under resolution 53/13) and the draft text at <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/g23/135/49/pdf/g2313549.pdf> - S/RES/2730 (2024): <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4049572> - A/RES/79/1: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4061879> - A/RES/79/138: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4071344> - A/RES/79/323: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4087700>

2B. HOW NGOS TAKE PART IN THE UN

United Nations (DESA NGO Branch), Last Accessed: October 2026: Three levels of NGO status at the UN

Tagline: Defining NGO consultative status

Source: According to... United Nations (DESA NGO Branch), Last Accessed: October 2026

Link: <https://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/about.htm>

Fact: It states... ECOSOC has granted consultative status to NGOs since 1946, starting with 41 organizations. Article 71 of the UN Charter provides for this, and ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 sets the current rules. A 19-member Committee on NGOs recommends which groups receive status. General status is for large international NGOs, special status for groups expert in a few fields, and the roster for groups with a narrow or technical focus.

This means... NGOs can speak at the UN, but governments decide which NGOs get in. Delegates could propose changes to how this committee works.

UN DESA, February 3, 2025: 6,468 NGOs hold UN consultative status

Tagline: Counting NGOs with UN status

Source: According to... UN DESA, February 3, 2025

Link: <https://www.un.org/en/desa/amplifying-voices-civil-society>

Fact: It states... At the end of 2024, 6,468 NGOs held consultative status with ECOSOC. In its 2025 session the Committee on NGOs reviewed 213 new applications, and 326 applications had been deferred (postponed) from earlier sessions.

This means... Many NGO applications wait session after session. Delegates who favor wider NGO access may criticize repeated deferrals, while others may argue careful review protects the UN from groups with political agendas.

2C. UN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION AND FUNDING

United Nations Ukraine, December 4, 2024: The 2025 appeal seeks 47 billion dollars

Tagline: Launching the 2025 appeal

Source: According to... United Nations Ukraine, December 4, 2024

Link: <https://ukraine.un.org/en/285114-%E2%80%98-world-fire-we-must-reset-our-relationship-people-crises%E2%80%99>

Fact: It states... When launching the 2025 Global Humanitarian Overview, UN relief chief Tom Fletcher said, "We must reset the world's relationship with people in direst need." About 305 million people would need aid in 2025, and the UN sought 47 billion dollars to help 190 million of them, working with over 1,500 partners. Only 43 percent of the 2024 appeal had been funded by November 2024.

This means... The UN depends on more than 1,500 partners, most of them NGOs, to deliver its plans. Funding gaps were already serious before the 2025 cuts, showing the problem is long-term.

OCHA, December 26, 2025: The humanitarian reset sends 55 percent of pooled funds to local NGOs

Tagline: Reviewing the humanitarian reset

Source: According to... OCHA, December 26, 2025

Link: <https://www.unocha.org/news/ochas-2025-review>

Fact: It states... In 2025 the humanitarian system reduced its appeal to 29.1 billion dollars from the 44 billion first requested, and funding was the lowest since 2016. Still, nearly 98 million people were reached. Country-based pooled funds gave 55 percent of their money to local and national NGOs, the highest share ever, and 17 percent of that went to local women's organizations. The "humanitarian reset" has four priorities: setting priorities, delivering aid more efficiently, handing power to local responders, and defending humanitarian space.

This means... The UN itself now says local responders should have more power. Delegates can build on the reset's four priorities as a ready-made structure for their resolution.

United Nations Meetings Coverage, December 10, 2025: The yearly humanitarian resolution is withdrawn after 33 years of consensus

Tagline: Breaking a 33-year consensus

Source: According to... United Nations Meetings Coverage, December 10, 2025

Link: <https://press.un.org/en/2025/ga12742.doc.htm>

Fact: It states... Sweden withdrew the General Assembly's annual "omnibus" resolution on coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance (draft A/80/L.25), which had been adopted by consensus for 33 years, after amendments were introduced; one delegation had sought changes to more than 70 paragraphs. The United States proposed amendments against language on sexual and reproductive health care and climate change and called the text a "globalist wish-list," while the Russian Federation proposed a paragraph against unilateral coercive measures (sanctions imposed by one country alone). The Assembly still adopted a text on the safety of humanitarian and UN personnel by 153 votes to 1 (the United States), with 6 abstentions including the Russian Federation, and a text on natural disasters by 162 votes to 1.

This means... Countries no longer agree on the basic yearly UN statement about how humanitarian aid should work. SOCHUM delegates can try to rebuild agreement by separating widely shared points, such as protecting aid workers, from the most divisive ones.

2D. PROTECTING AID WORKERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

United Nations, May 31, 2024: Security Council adopts resolution 2730 on protecting aid workers

Tagline: Protecting humanitarian personnel

Source: According to... United Nations, May 31, 2024

Link: <https://www.un.org/en/node/218150>

Fact: It states... On May 24, 2024, the Security Council adopted resolution 2730 by 14 votes in favor, none against and one abstention, with 97 co-sponsoring countries. It calls on states to respect and protect UN and humanitarian personnel, urges states to join the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and expresses concern that false information is eroding trust in aid groups.

This means... The Security Council has already spoken on protecting aid workers, yet 2024 still set a death record. SOCHUM can focus on what the Council left out, such as the special risks faced by local staff.

UN Human Rights Council, July 6, 2023: States should not misuse funding rules against civil society

Tagline: Defending civil society funding

Source: According to... UN Human Rights Council, July 6, 2023

Link: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/g23/135/49/pdf/g2313549.pdf>

Fact: It states... The draft resolution on "civil society space" (later adopted as resolution 53/13) calls on states to make sure funding rules respect human rights and are not misused to block civil society work. It stresses the ability of groups to ask for, receive and use resources, and urges states to protect civil society actors from threats, harassment and arbitrary detention.

This means... The UN already has language protecting the right of NGOs to receive money, including foreign money. Delegates can quote this language when debating foreign agent laws.

UN Digital Library, July 4, 2024: The High Commissioner reports on civil society space

Tagline: Reporting on civil society space

Source: According to... UN Digital Library, July 4, 2024

Link: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4061481>

Fact: It states... The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued report A/HRC/57/31, "Civil society space," on July 4, 2024. It was submitted under Human Rights Council resolution 53/13, which asked for a report on assessing trends in civic space.

This means... The UN is now monitoring how much freedom NGOs have country by country. Delegates can propose that this monitoring continue or expand.

2E. UN REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

UN News, February 27, 2026: The New Humanitarian Compact aims to cut duplication

Tagline: Building a new humanitarian compact

Source: According to... UN News, February 27, 2026

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/02/1167055>

Fact: It states... Under the UN80 reform effort, Tom Fletcher briefed member states on a "New Humanitarian Compact" to make aid faster, leaner and more accountable. Proposals include simpler planning and reporting, joined-up supply chains, a common services catalogue, a shared humanitarian data system, and clearer roles for agencies in food, health and nutrition. UNICEF's chief called separate warehouses, fleets and logistics "unsustainable."

This means... The UN is merging its own systems to save money. Delegates can ask whether NGOs, especially local ones, will be included in these shared systems or left out.

Council on Foreign Relations, September 15, 2025: The UN plans a 20 percent budget cut

Tagline: Cutting the UN budget

Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, September 15, 2025

Link: <https://www.cfr.org/article/un80-initiative-what-know-about-united-nations-reform-plan>

Fact: It states... The UN80 Initiative, launched in March 2025, planned to cut the Secretariat's 3.7 billion dollar budget by 20 percent in 2026, with roughly 6,900 jobs at risk out of about 35,000. A task force listed more than 50 proposals, including streamlining the work of WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO. About 2.4 billion dollars in member dues were unpaid as of April 2025.

This means... The UN itself has less money to coordinate NGOs. Delegates must consider whether NGOs will need to take on work the UN can no longer do.

UN News, October 12, 2026: The UN refugee chief warns that "efficiency has limits"

Tagline: Reaching the limits of doing more with less

Source: According to... UN News, October 12, 2026

Link: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/10/1168575>

Fact: It states... The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) had received only 3 billion of the 8.5 billion dollars it needs for 2026, while 117 million people are forced from their homes, and about 8,000 staff have left the agency since 2024. Its chief, Barham Salih, said, "There comes a point when greater efficiency cannot compensate for fewer resources." He warned that cuts threaten specialised care for more than 50,000 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Sudan and services for unaccompanied children in Chad, and that refugee registration has stopped for tens of thousands of new arrivals in Ethiopia.

This means... UN reform can save money, but it cannot replace money that is gone. Delegates who argue that mergers and efficiency will solve the crisis should be ready for this answer from inside the UN itself.

United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator on SEA, 2025: Checking implementing partners for abuse risks

Tagline: Preventing abuse by aid workers

Source: According to... United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator on SEA, 2025

Link: https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/sites/www.un.org.preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/files/2025_-_oscsea_annual_psea_factsheet.pdf

Fact: It states... The UN Partner Portal checks implementing partners in 15 high-risk countries for protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. In WHO's Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, only 9 of 83 cases were proven to involve WHO staff, and most survivors were linked to people from partner agencies. A Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, which stops abusers from moving between aid groups, had 323 participating organizations.

This means... Accountability problems affect UN staff and NGO partners alike. Any plan to hand more money to NGOs needs strong rules to protect the people receiving aid.

2F. WHAT IS WORKING AND WHAT IS NOT

Working: - UN pooled funds have reached local organizations far better than direct donor grants, rising to 55 percent in 2025. - The UN still reached nearly 98 million people in 2025 despite the deepest funding cuts on record. - The UN has clear written standards protecting aid workers (S/RES/2730) and civil society funding (HRC resolution 53/13).

Not working: - Direct funding to local actors remains near 4 percent, far below the 25 percent goal set in 2016. - Aid worker deaths reached a record in 2024 despite Security Council resolutions. - Hundreds of NGO applications for UN status are deferred year after year. - The system depended on one main donor, so a single government's cuts sharply reduced aid worldwide. - In December 2025 the General Assembly could not agree on its yearly humanitarian resolution for the first time in 33 years.

2G. WHERE THE MAJOR BLOCS STAND

Countries rarely act alone in SOCHUM. The groups below are the ones delegates are most likely to meet in committee, with their known positions on aid, NGOs and local institutions.

Bloc or country	Known position	Source
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United States	Cut its aid sharply in 2025 and closed USAID (see Part 1A and Part 1C). At the UN it voted against the 2025 text on the safety of aid workers and called the yearly humanitarian resolution a "globalist wish-list," objecting to language on reproductive health and climate change.	According to... United Nations Meetings Coverage, December 10, 2025
European Union	Says it is the largest humanitarian donor (35 percent of global funding in 2025, with its member states). Its 2026 plan backs a greater role for local actors, cash, pooled funds, multi-year funding and stronger protection for aid workers.	According to... European External Action Service, May 27, 2026
Russian Federation	Abstained on the 2025 text on the safety of aid workers and pushed for language against unilateral coercive measures (sanctions). At home it uses a "foreign agent" law, in force since 2012, that has led many non-profits to close or lose funding (see Part 1E).	According to... United Nations Meetings Coverage, December 10, 2025
Group of 77 and China	The largest group of developing countries at the UN. Speaking for it in December 2025, Iraq introduced the text on natural disasters, which calls for acting before disasters strike, and regretted that texts once adopted by consensus were now forced to a vote.	According to... United Nations Meetings Coverage, December 10, 2025
African Union	Wants "African solutions to African problems." It has endorsed an African Humanitarian Agency, funded mainly by Africa's own resources and working through regional and national systems (see Part 3E).	According to... African Union, April 15, 2019
Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter	Speaking through Venezuela in December 2025, this group blamed humanitarian crises on "politically driven actions" and condemned unilateral coercive measures. Delegates should expect it to defend national sovereignty and oppose outside pressure on governments.	According to... United Nations Meetings Coverage, December 10, 2025

Links for the sources in this table appear in the matching entries: Part 2C (United Nations Meetings Coverage), Part 3E (European External Action Service and African Union).

PART 3, INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

3A. HUMANITARIAN REFORM AGREEMENTS

Inter-Agency Standing Committee, May 7, 2024: Grand Bargain signatories pledge 25 percent to local actors

Tagline: Pledging 25 percent to local actors

Source: According to... Inter-Agency Standing Committee, May 7, 2024

Link: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/localisation-learning-space-progressing-towards-25-direct-funding-local-and-national-actors-0>

Fact: It states... Under the Grand Bargain, donor governments, UN agencies and NGOs committed to send at least 25 percent of humanitarian funding to local and national actors "as directly as possible," to improve results for affected people and reduce costs. In May 2024 a group including Denmark, the European Union, OCHA, Save the Children, UNHCR and USAID met to review progress toward that target.

This means... The Grand Bargain (agreed in 2016) is the main international promise on localization. Delegates can call on countries to recommit to it, set deadlines, or create a way to measure progress.

ALNAP, November 1, 2025: The Grand Bargain plans for life after 2026

Tagline: Reviewing the Grand Bargain at ten

Source: According to... ALNAP, November 1, 2025

Link: <https://alnapp.org/help-library/resources/grand-bargain-annual-meeting-2025-summary-note/>

Fact: It states... The 2025 Grand Bargain annual meeting was held on October 8-9, 2025, at the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, with 145 senior participants from donor governments, UN agencies, international and local NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the World Bank. They reviewed progress on the current framework (known as Grand Bargain 3.0), set goals for the following 14 months, and discussed the future of the agreement after 2026, the year it reaches ten years.

This means... The main international promise on localization is due to end or be renewed in 2026. Delegates can propose what should replace it, for example a renewed agreement with binding targets and public yearly reporting on direct local funding.

3B. DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS STANDARDS

OECD, March 2, 2005: The Paris Declaration puts receiving countries in charge

Tagline: Putting countries in charge

Source: According to... OECD, March 2, 2005

Link: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/api/print?ids=141&lang=en>

Fact: It states... The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness set five principles. Ownership means developing countries set their own strategies. Alignment means donors support those strategies and use local systems. Harmonization means donors coordinate and avoid duplication. Managing for results means measuring outcomes. Mutual accountability means donors and partner countries answer to each other.

This means... This is the historic basis for the idea that aid should strengthen local institutions instead of replacing them. Delegates arguing for government-led aid will often cite these principles.

ICNL, July 12, 2021: OECD donors adopt a standard on enabling civil society

Tagline: Setting a donor standard for civil society

Source: According to... ICNL, July 12, 2021

Link: <https://www.icnl.org/post/report/oecd-recommendation-on-enabling-civil-society>

Fact: It states... On July 6, 2021, the OECD Development Assistance Committee adopted the Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance. It covers protecting civic space, increasing support to local civil society, consulting civil society, and strengthening civil society governance. It is the first international standard on how donors should work with civil society.

This means... Donor countries have already agreed on paper to support local civil society. Delegates can push for this standard to be applied more widely, including by donors outside the OECD.

3C. COUNTERTERRORISM RULES AND NGOS

Financial Action Task Force, November 16, 2023: Rules on non-profits revised to stop misuse

Tagline: Protecting non-profits from misuse

Source: According to... Financial Action Task Force, November 16, 2023

Link: <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/topics/non-profit-organisations.html>

Fact: It states... The Financial Action Task Force, which sets global anti-money-laundering rules, revised its Recommendation 8 on non-profit organizations on November 16, 2023. The change responded to countries applying excessive measures against non-profits by misreading the rule. The FATF says its measures "should not disrupt or discourage legitimate non-profit activities," and in 2025 it created a way to raise concerns when its standards are misapplied.

This means... Rules meant to stop terrorist financing have been used to block real NGO work, including making it hard for NGOs to open bank accounts. Delegates can call on states to follow the revised rule.

UN Digital Library, December 9, 2022: Security Council creates a humanitarian exemption to sanctions

Tagline: Exempting aid from sanctions

Source: According to... UN Digital Library, December 9, 2022

Link: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3997259>

Fact: It states... Resolution 2664 (2022) was adopted by the Security Council on December 9, 2022, by a vote of 14 to 0 with one abstention. It concerns humanitarian exemptions to asset freezes imposed by UN sanctions regimes.

This means... NGOs working in sanctioned countries need legal protection so that buying fuel, food or medicine is not treated as breaking sanctions. Delegates can call for this exemption to be fully applied in national law.

3D. INTERNATIONAL NGOS AND NETWORKS

CIVICUS, December 9, 2025: Only about 7 percent of people live with open civic space

Tagline: Rating civic freedom worldwide

Source: According to... CIVICUS, December 9, 2025

Link: https://monitor.civicus.org/press_release/2025/global-press-realease/

Fact: It states... The CIVICUS Monitor rates 198 countries and territories. In 2025, 15 countries were downgraded, and 83 countries and territories were rated "closed" or "repressed," up from 67 in 2020. Just over 7 percent of the world's population lives in "open" or "narrowed" civic space, down from nearly 13 percent in 2020. Detaining protesters was the most common violation, recorded in at least 76 countries.

This means... Most of the world's people live where NGOs and citizens face serious limits. Delegates should expect that many governments in the room are themselves rated as restrictive, which shapes what language they will accept.

Humanitarian Practice Network, September 13, 2024: International NGOs pledge to let local partners lead

Tagline: Pledging equal partnerships by 2030

Source: According to... Humanitarian Practice Network, September 13, 2024

Link: <https://odihpn.org/publication/the-pledge-for-change-uniting-to-build-a-stronger-aid-ecosystem/>

Fact: It states... The Pledge for Change began in 2020 when Degan Ali of Adeso, a Kenya-based NGO, gathered leaders of large international NGOs, and it was launched publicly in October 2022. Signatories make three pledges: equal partnerships in which national and local organizations lead wherever possible, telling stories about aid with local people at the centre, and pushing donors and peers to change. Equal partnership is meant to become the normal way of working by 2030. At the time of the article there were 13 international NGO signatories and 55 supporters, and each signatory reports on its progress every year.

This means... Some large international NGOs are promising to give up power to local partners voluntarily. Delegates can praise this model and ask whether such promises should be checked by an independent body or remain voluntary.

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, January 28, 2026: Localization risks becoming only words

Tagline: Warning against empty localization

Source: According to... Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, January 28, 2026

Link: <https://hhi.harvard.edu/news/2026/01/state-humanitarian-aid-2026>

Fact: It states... The director of Harvard's humanitarian research center wrote that deep donor cuts and the closure of USAID have forced NGOs to close field programs and shrink their emergency teams, and that the problem is in the structure of the system, not only a gap in money. Local partners are being asked to take on more work just as funding shrinks and paperwork demands grow, so localization "risks becoming a rhetorical commitment rather than a genuine redistribution of power and resources." He proposes smaller coalitions, regional response hubs, and funding that rewards speed and local decision-making.

This means... Moving work to local groups without moving money and decision power to them only shifts the burden. Delegates can argue that any localization clause must include real funding and fair overhead, not only new responsibilities.

NEAR Network, Last Accessed: October 2026: A locally led fund helps members survive the US funding freeze

Tagline: Bridging local groups through cuts

Source: According to... NEAR Network, Last Accessed: October 2026

Link: <https://near.ngo/the-change-fund-bridge-funding-window>

Fact: It states... NEAR, a network of local and national NGOs from the Global South, runs the Change Fund, a pooled fund that is led and governed by local organizations and has managed more than 5 million dollars in grants since 2022. After the US foreign aid pause ordered on January 24, 2025, NEAR opened a "bridge funding" window giving flexible, trust-based grants to members hit by the freeze, with priority for organizations with budgets under 1 million dollars. Of more than 120 members who reported, 83 percent were affected, and more than 13.5 million people had lost access to services.

This means... Local organizations are building their own pooled funds instead of waiting for UN or donor funds. Delegates can propose that donors put money directly into locally governed funds like this one, which would count toward the 25 percent localization target.

3E. REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND DONOR BLOCS

European External Action Service, May 27, 2026: The EU adopts a new plan for humanitarian aid

Tagline: Protecting, performing and partnering

Source: According to... European External Action Service, May 27, 2026

Link: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/african-union-au/defending-values-driving-reform-delivering-impact-new-measures-strengthen-eu-humanitarian-action_en

Fact: It states... The European Union and its member states provided the largest share of global humanitarian funding in 2025 (35 percent), and the European Commission alone set aside almost 2 billion euros for humanitarian aid in 2026. The EU's new Joint Communication on Humanitarian Aid rests on three pillars: protect, perform and partner. It promises more measures and funding for the safety of aid workers, "a greater role for local actors in the humanitarian response," and wider use of cash, anticipatory action, multi-year funding, pooled funds and support for local actors. It notes that current global funding can help fewer than half of the 239 million people in need.

This means... The largest donor bloc now formally supports localization, pooled funds and cash, the same tools discussed in Part 1. Delegates from EU countries can point to this plan as proof of commitment, and other delegates can ask the EU to attach measurable targets, such as a share of funding sent directly to local groups.

African Union, April 15, 2019: Africa plans its own humanitarian agency

Tagline: Building an African humanitarian agency

Source: According to... African Union, April 15, 2019

Link: https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/36459-pr-pr_054-_on_member_states_meeting_on_african_humanitarian_agency.pdf

Fact: It states... The Assembly of the African Union endorsed the creation of an African Humanitarian Agency and adopted the Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness in January 2016, aiming for effective humanitarian action by 2025. The agency is meant to work through regional and national systems and to be funded mainly from Africa's own resources, "in the spirit of Pan-Africanism which encourages African solutions to African problems." At the time, Africa hosted more than one third of the world's displaced people, including 14.5 million internally displaced persons and 6.3 million refugees.

This means... African governments want more control over aid on their own continent, which is localization at the level of regions and states rather than NGOs. Delegates can propose that UN pooled funds and donors work with this agency, while asking how it will be paid for now that aid is falling.

3F. PROPOSED AND EMERGING EFFORTS

- **The humanitarian reset and New Humanitarian Compact:** UN-led reforms (2025-2026) to set priorities, share services and hand more power to local responders (see Part 2).
- **Regional pooled funds:** New UN regional funds opened in 2024 for Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Asia and the Pacific (see Part 1C).
- **Sevilla Commitment (2025):** The newest UN agreement on financing for development, which will shape how aid is raised in coming years (see table in Part 2A).
- **Misconduct Disclosure Scheme:** A shared system among more than 300 organizations to stop abusers moving between aid groups (see Part 2E).
- **A successor to the Grand Bargain:** The Grand Bargain turns ten in 2026, and its signatories are deciding what should follow it (see Part 3A).
- **Locally governed pooled funds:** Funds such as NEAR's Change Fund are run by local organizations themselves (see Part 3D).
- **Recognition of informal local groups:** Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms have asked to be recognized as humanitarian actors, a model other crisis zones may follow (see Part 1B).

- **The EU's 2026 humanitarian plan:** A Joint Communication that backs local actors, cash and pooled funds (see Part 3E).
- **An African Humanitarian Agency:** A continental body, funded mainly by African states, to lead response on the continent (see Part 3E).
- **Donor-controlled pooled funds:** The 2025 US pledge of 2 billion dollars through a single OCHA fund, with conditions attached, may become a model for other donors (see Part 1C).

KEY VOCABULARY

1. **Non-governmental organization (NGO):** A group that is independent of government and usually not run for profit.
2. **International NGO (INGO):** An NGO that works in many countries, usually with headquarters in a wealthy donor country.
3. **Local and national actors:** Organizations based in the country receiving aid, including local NGOs, community groups and national Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies.
4. **Localization:** Shifting money, decisions and leadership in aid toward local and national actors.
5. **Official development assistance (ODA):** Aid given by governments to help the economic development and welfare of developing countries.
6. **Consultative status:** Official recognition by ECOSOC that allows an NGO to attend and speak at certain UN meetings.
7. **Pooled fund:** A single pot of money from many donors, managed by the UN, which gives grants to many aid groups.
8. **Cash and voucher assistance:** Aid given as money or vouchers so people can buy what they need locally.
9. **Intermediary:** An organization, often an INGO or UN agency, that receives money from a donor and passes it on to a local partner.
10. **Civic space:** The freedom of people and groups to organize, speak, protest and take part in public life.
11. **Foreign agent law:** A law requiring groups that receive money from abroad to register and often to label themselves as foreign-funded.
12. **Humanitarian principles:** The rules of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence that guide emergency aid.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The world promised to send 25 percent of humanitarian money to local actors "as directly as possible," yet direct funding is near 4 percent. What would make this promise binding, and who should check progress?
2. Should aid flow mainly through national governments, through local NGOs, or through international NGOs? Does the answer change if the government is at war with part of its own people?
3. When does a government have a fair reason to regulate foreign-funded NGOs, and when does regulation become a way to silence them?
4. Should NGOs keep working in a country whose rulers ban women from aid jobs, or should they withdraw until the ban ends?
5. With aid budgets falling by almost a quarter, which should come first: reaching the most people, reaching the people in greatest danger, or building local institutions for the future?

6. Local staff face most of the danger in aid work. How can the UN protect them better than it does today?
 7. How can donors reduce fraud and abuse without burying small local organizations in paperwork?
 8. Should the UN make it easier for NGOs from developing countries to gain consultative status, and how?
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RESEARCH GAPS AND NOTES FOR THE COACH

1. **Resolution table re-checked in October 2026:** Adoption dates for S/RES/2664, S/RES/2730, A/RES/79/1 and A/RES/79/323 were confirmed on the UN Digital Library and added. HRC resolution 53/13 is confirmed through the UN record of report A/HRC/57/31, which says it was submitted under that resolution; the exact adoption day of 53/13 was not shown on the pages opened.
 2. **Remaining undated pages:** Two entries still use "Last Accessed: October 2026" because the pages show no date when re-checked in October 2026: the UN DESA NGO Branch page and the NEAR Change Fund page. The OCHA 2025 review now carries its posted date, December 26, 2025. The OECD release (April 2026) and the Global Humanitarian Overview (December 2025) show only a month, and the UN sexual exploitation factsheet shows only a year (2025). The OCHA pooled fund review date (May 1, 2025) comes from the page's own date stamp.
 3. **Grand Bargain outcome:** The decisions of the October 2025 Grand Bargain meeting on life after 2026 were not published on the page opened; delegates should check for a 2026 announcement before the conference.
 4. **News coverage:** Major news sources are now NPR (via WHYY) and the Associated Press (via WTTW, a PBS station). Reuters and AP's own sites blocked access during research, so no Reuters page was opened; a Reuters story on the Red Cross cutting about 2,900 jobs for 2026 was found only on secondary sites and was left out.
 5. **Bloc positions:** The bloc table rests mostly on the December 10, 2025 General Assembly meeting record. China's own stated position on NGOs and aid was not found on a page that could be opened; delegates representing China should check China's UN mission statements. The 2026 sessions of the UN Committee on NGOs could not be opened either.
 6. **Resolution table:** The December 2025 General Assembly texts on aid worker safety and natural disasters are described in Part 2C by their draft symbols; their final resolution numbers were not confirmed on an official UN page and were not added to the table in Part 2A.
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