

HMDC Presents... SOCHUM: Part 3 (International Efforts)

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.

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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