

**Report on  
National Consultation on Joint Standard Initiative (JSI) in Nepal  
(Sphere, HAP and People in Aid)  
10<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

## **1. Background**

Over the last 20 years the humanitarian sector has grown into a multi-billion dollar enterprise and consequently has become increasingly professionalized. With this has come the creation of a variety of standards and accountability mechanisms to ensure that humanitarian assistance is high quality, which is especially important given that crisis affected people are often vulnerable and voiceless.

However numbers of standards initiatives in existence have posed challenge to the field workers, donors and governments in combining and implementing them in an efficient, complementary and effective way.

In response to the perceived confusion, lack of awareness and inconsistent application of standards, three of the leading standards initiatives (Sphere Project, HAP-I and People In Aid) have launched a process to seek greater coherence for users of standards, in order to ultimately improve humanitarian action to people affected by disasters. This pioneering collaborative effort is called the Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) and has the potential to significantly improve quality and accountability across the sector.

## **2. Objective**

To contribute and make recommendations towards the Joint Standard Initiatives globally to develop a new quality and accountability standards architecture, in order to support aid-workers and humanitarian agencies to improve humanitarian action to the people they assist. The consultation also aimed to strengthen humanitarian System in Nepal and South Asia through consultation above.

## **3. Workshop Summary**

A half day National Consultation Workshop on Joint Standard Initiative (JSI) was held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2013 between 9.30 am to 2.00 pm at Hotel Orchid, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu. The workshop was organized by DPNet-Nepal in collaboration with the Government of Nepal, UN agencies, AIN-TGDM, INGOs, Nepal Red Cross Society and Humanitarian Organizations in Nepal. The program was chaired by Dr. Meen B. Paudel Chhetri, Chairperson of DPNet-Nepal. The keynote speakers were Mr. Shyam Sundar Jnavaly, Coordinator, AIN-TGDM, Mr. Umesh Dhakal, Chief Executive Director, Nepal Red Cross Society, Mr. Badri Khanal, Former President, DPNet-Nepal, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Koirala, Under Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr. Pitambar Aryal, Vice Chairperson of DPNet-Nepal.

The workshop was begun with the welcoming remarks of Mr. Deepak Paudel, Executive Member of DPNet-Nepal. Highlighting the objectives of the consultation, he welcomed the guests and participants to the program. Mr. Ram Chandra Neupane, General Secretary of DPNet-Nepal made a paper presentation on Joint Standard Initiative. Mr. Vikrant Mahajan, Chief Executive Officer of SPHERE India also facilitated the session.

A total of 39 participants, representatives of various agencies attended the consultation.

#### 4. Key notes by the speakers

##### **Mr. Shyam Sundar Jnawal, Coordinator, AIN-TGDMCC**

- The standards of the quality and accountability had been initiated since 1990s in disaster response; however these standards had been practiced by Red Cross Movement as code of conduct before many years.
- **The sphere project** is more focused on disaster relief work, disaster affected people and community. **People in Aid** is concerned on aid workers who are the at most risk of disasters (they involve in disaster response when there is emergency and put themselves at risk). **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)** is more focused on humanitarian organizations, stakeholders and chain of agencies (Relief organizations, Market, aid workers, human chain) which are related and involve in disaster relief work.
- After the Tsunami in Indonesia and Earthquake in Haiti it was realized that the coherent between the three standards is significant.

##### **Mr. Umesh Dhakal, Executive Director, Nepal Red Cross Society**

Umesh Dhakal, Executive Director, Nepal Red Cross Society,

- Before the decade of 1990s disaster response was relief centric rather than preparedness
  - Since the decade of 1990s, it was recognized that receiving a service by a disaster affected people is his right.
  - the service should be provided to the people with dignity
- The Sphere Project is related with standards and indicators, The HAP is focused on quality and accountability and People in Aid is more concerned with aid workers.
- All standard are complimentary to each other, each standard was used as reference in the development of another standard.
- The Joint Standard Initiative has begun to fulfill the gaps and to develop the coherence between these standards.
- The Red Cross Movement had been involved from the very beginning in developing humanitarian standards in the Global level. In the context of Nepal, Red Cross Movement has been making its efforts to adopt and practice all humanitarian standards where it is necessary.
- Though the standards are core in emergency response and relief work, but, in reality, we can realize that first come life saving then standards. The political, social and resources have vital role for this. For the effective and implementation of these standards awareness and Humanitarian capacity development should be considered. The Policy environment also have important role for the application of these standards
- JSI will contribute to ensure the quality service delivery in an effective way.

**Pradeep Koirala, Under Secretary, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Home Affairs**

- Actor's qualification and code of conduct are very important during the disaster relief work. Since the issue of humanitarian standards is very sensitive, the common consensus among the government, aid workers and affected community and people. The standards should be applicable in the local context.

**Mr. Badri Khanal,**

- The humanitarian standards are crucial to achieve the objective of humanitarian agencies and aid workers. The need of the disaster affected people should be addressed in right based approach.
- There is diversity among the of aid workers, it is necessary to develop coherence on protection and assistance in disaster relief work.
- The Joint Standard Initiative is very good initiative and will be more effective to address the needs of the disaster affected people and community properly through coherence in standards.
- The JSI will bring and put together the commonalities of all three standards.
- All the humanitarian standards are good enough but the focused should be given on how to implement those in better collaborative way ensuring the extensive participation of disaster affected people.

**Mr. Pitambar Aryal**

- The Sphere project has covered many things; however the coherence between these three standards will carry on for the harmonization among the service delivery actors in comprehensive manner.
- In fact, responders are at risk and essential equipments are essential for them while going disaster response. Humanitarian imperative should come first/ right and dignity of the affected population should be respected.
- The Joint Standard Initiative is itself a good initiation and this kind of consultation crucial to make recommendation on how the quality service delivery is ensured during the disaster relief work.

**Mr. Deepak Adhikari, DSP, Armed Police Force, Government of Nepal**

Armed Police Force has been involved in disaster response, the sphere standards are followed in the preparedness plan.

**DSP Pradeep Kumar Shrestha**

All humanitarian standards are important but the effective coordination and collaboration among the concerned stakeholders is needed for the implementation of those standards

### Commonalities between three Standards

- Standard, Accountability
- Maximizing Efficiency, Effectiveness
- Program Quality
- All International Humanitarian Standards
- All for better effective service delivery
- Set standard for humanitarian response
- In both organizations can do preparedness
- All can be integrated in project cycle
- It would be better to mention quality in technical standard
- Quality & accountability
- Human right perspective
- All are working for the disaster response and relief
- Deals with disaster management
- Humanitarian concerns
- Service value
- All these standards are for providing response service targeted to affected population
- Making relief service effective & efficient
- TSP: Standard in Aid (for beneficiaries)
- HAP: Standard in Aid (For organization)
- PIA: Standard in Aid (for staff/volunteers)

### Distinctiveness between three Standards

- PID: not included protection measures "Code of Conduct"
- Sphere: Technical guidelines, minimum standard for basic requirement
- HAP: has certification, governance
- PIA: more on HR management, talks about responders needs
- Sphere is more focus about humanitarian response in emergency situation, focus on outside than internal mgt.
- HAP is more about organizational governance to talk about transparency
- PID talks about human resource or people mgt. within organization
- There are some overlapping and confusion among three
- There are some standards & norms which are difficult to attain particularly due to the lack of resources
- Some focus on setting standard/indicators while delivering services but some of them are more concerned on service provider as well as donor
- Sphere: Technical Standard, HAP: government standard, PID: people standard
- Sphere technical standard, HAP organizational governance, PID quality & security of aid workers
- All 3 deals with 3 different aspects of humanitarian response.
- TSP: Indicative, HAP: Mandatory, PIA: Contextual
- HAP is non-negotiable, Sphere can be negotiated, HAP governs overall accountability, Sphere guides minimum technical standard
- One deal with internal strategy (HAP), but sphere deal with response strategy (external), both cannot be certified

## Group Work

### Group 1

- Mainly we all are using the standard of Sphere standard in our daily works. Some have started to use People in Aid as well in their work. HAP is partially utilizing on the work. HAP is mainly used during M&E and Social Audit process.
- Sphere is focus on assessment, design and implementation
- HAP is in the use by few organizations during all project cycle.
- PIA principles are incorporated in organizations HR policy provision in general, but yet not devised as separate policy/entity for people working in emergency.
- It is being helpful to improve the quality of programming. Due to various minimum standards like HAP, People in Aid and Sphere have supported to design and implement the project during emergency phase.
- It has helped maintain similar response package in all area of response.
- Since it is internationally certified standard so it is easy to convince every stakeholder.
- PIA and HAP are not equally operationalised compare to Sphere in response projects, due to lack of clarity, understanding and mechanism! Awareness on PIA is also low among the organization management
- The ongoing spirit of one door system and formulation of DDRC and CBDR along with cluster approach are based on Sphere, it is good and taking appropriate momentum.
- However, due to availability of proper NFI at local/national market it is difficult to apply in all area. At the same time the product of various relief organizations are differ with each other had led to difficulties to maintain coherent to these three standards.
  - o *For example: the response in Koshi (2008) was much near to Sphere whereas response in Karnali (2008/9) was less! The rapid onset disaster is responded with Sphere standards but the slow onset disasters are not addressed!*
- It is relevant because it helped all the organization to work in coordination and collaboration.
- It helps to maintain national / regional standard on relief response
- It helps on planning and budgeting for individual organization.
  
- Sphere – It is more on technical standard and easy to follow
- Can set same guidelines for all kinds of response.
- Can provide similar standard to all organization
- Easy to acceptance and validation for different kinds of project by all humanitarian response.

### Group -2

- All 3 international standards, compatibility needed to replicate in 4 levels
- standards / services provided by donors in consistency
- Lack of coordination among stake holders – one door policy.
- Deferent perception of standards among stake holders.
- Limitation of resources – Hap (institutional), Sphere (technical).
- No Government Policy – roles and responsibility not clear, no accountability.
- Political interference.
  
- Cluster approach
- Initiatives taken by DpNet-Nepal and others

- Flexibility to implement standards
- Need assessment
- Organisation willingness to increase the credibility to government as well as donors.
- Awareness – organisation, workers, community
- Availability of standards at all levels
- Easy and simple procedures
- Regulatory mechanism, monitoring and evaluation, committee representative all stake holders.
- Good coordination among all stake holders – special civil military at national level.
- Continuity of representative personnel, institutional memory, documentation.
- Users friendly
- Avoiding the duplication and ambiguity among three standards
- Link two three bench mark into one set of indicator

### **Group-3**

- SPHERE-Technical standard on relief and response items
- HAP- Organizational governance, structure, policy framework
- People In Aid- HR system, quality and accountability of staffs
- Lack of awareness on all standards: donors, stakeholders and community
- Country level: local standards
- Lack of sufficient resources to implement these standards
- Gap of Government policy to implement existing standards
- Lack of integration of SPHERE, HAP, PIA standards into government response guidelines
- Lack of mandatory compliance monitoring and evaluation mechanism for humanitarian response
- Complain handling mechanism is very challenging, which required under HAP.
- Costly, resource oriented, abide by stakeholders including partners-very challenging
- Right Based Approach is very challenging in the context of country
- Standards should be mandatory
- Verification process should be conduct by internal and external
- Establish the mandatory process of compliance, monitoring and evaluation mechanism of humanitarian response
- Capacity building and awareness is required at all level.
- Allocation of resources
- Need to integration of SPHERE, HAP, PIA standards into government response guidelines

### **Group-4**

- Appropriate assessment tool to be designed and applied accordingly
- Responders to be provided with essential equipment
- Having focus appropriate legal and policy frameworks
- Harmonization among service delivery actors in comprehensive manner
- Quality and capacity building of each agency
- Creating awareness at different level

- Involvement of local people/affected population in designing and implementing service packages and local authority should take a lead
- Capacitate local level response mechanisms
- The set standards should address need of aid workers, beneficiaries and partner organizations
- Humanitarian imperative should come first/ right and dignity of the affected population should be respected
- Equitable services to be provided taking into consideration of marginalized groups (women, children, elderly and differently able) needs to be addressed
- Situation will be severe due to change context:
- Rapid urbanization, population growth, climate change/global warming, increasing conflicts, over exploitation of natural resources; recession of global economy (social crime, violence), increasing slum communities
- Increasing need of coordination and collaboration among the partners and humanitarian assistance
- Victims/affected population of conflict and disasters will increase and humanitarian needs will be complex
- Humanitarian quality and accountability standards needs to be comprehensive and address emerging needs
- Aid workers to be trained and ensured their safety (SOPs and COC to be applied)
- For effective and efficient services modern science and technology to be used (EWS, regular monitoring of situation)
- Beneficiaries to be involved in designing the service package and creating awareness among affected population and other key stakeholders
- Transparency to be ensured adopting various approaches e.g. social audit, regular meetings, sharing of reports, website
- Because the standards need to be able to address emerging needs
- Standard should focus on all dimensions and actors (aid worker, beneficiaries and partners/donors)

Mr. Ram Chandra Neupane, General Secretary of DPNet-Nepal made a PowerPoint presentation on Joint Standard Initiative (JSI). The presentation covered the background and chronological development of three initiatives (Sphere Project, HAP-I and People In Aid). He also explained how the JSI started and its objectives.

The program was concluded with the short remarks of Dr. Meen B. Poudyal Chhetri, chairperson of DPNet-Nepal. Dr. Chhetri thanked all participants, keynote speakers and guests for their invaluable contribution to the program. He expressed his special gratitude to the facilitator from SPHERE India. Dr. Chhetri highlighted that all three standards are equally important and developed with the same humanitarian philosophy. The coherence among these will create more consistency and make easy to the aid workers, implementing agencies and concerned stakeholders in disaster response and relief work.