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Hpg annual report 2017

HPG commissioned the report by Victoria Metcalfe-Hough, Wendy Fenton and Lydia Poole June 2019 Executive Summary In May 2016, representatives of 18 donor countries and 16 aid organisations (including the UN, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement (RCRCM) and NGOs (NGOs)) agreed on a Grand Bargain outlining 51 separate commitments to improve the effectiveness and effectiveness of international humanitarian aid. These entities agreed to a voluntary self-reporting mechanism, supported by an annual independent report, to measure their joint progress against the agreed commitments. The second annual independent report, conducted by the HUMANITARIAN Policy Group (HPG) at the ODI and published in June 2018, concluded that, based on the available evidence, there was an important progress in 2017 in the need to reduce the significant bureaucratic burden on signatories; and the need to increase mutual trust and trust in order to allow for a better functioning of the quid pro quo – an agreement between the constituent groups of signatories in which each would commit to achieve a number of measures that, together, would bring about changes at system level. This report is the third annual independent review of the collective progress made by the Signatories of the Grand Bargain in relation to their commitments. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Commission on behalf of facilitation group (FG) covers the period from January to December 2018. The primary source of data for this audit was self-reporting by 52 of the 59 signatories in 2018, and bilateral, semi-structured interviews with 50 of these signatories. Additional data was collected through narrative reports submitted by interlocutors of six working flows, bilateral research interviews with at least one contributor for each of the eight remaining work flows, semi-standing research interviews with 38 individuals from non-signatory organisations and a comprehensive review of relevant grey and published literature. In the direction of the eminent person and FG, signatories were asked to present a more detailed report than in previous years, with specific indicators foreseen for reporting in relation to the 11 core commitments agreed in September 2018; on efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in a major bargain; and with a particular focus on the reporting results achieved and not only on the measures taken or planned. Key areas of progress Responding to the conclusions of the second annual report and discussion at the Annual Meeting of the Signatories of the Grand Bargain in June 2018, The person, supported by strengthened FG, outlined steps to simplify the structures of the Grand Bargain and provide a clearer focus for joint efforts. This led to the merger of two working flows, the articulation of a set of 11 core commitments, drawn from the original 51, which the signatories agreed would likely deliver the largest dividends in terms of transforming the humanitarian aid system, a stronger role for FG and a results-oriented reporting approach. At a significant level, signatories have achieved a lot in 2018. In self-reported reports, signatories increased activity in 51 commitments, with an average of 68% of signatories reporting reporting activities against commitments relevant to them compared to 52% in 2017. Workstream 3 (Cash programming) stood out again in terms of performance and overall progress. The working flow was very active as a coordinating body led by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Kingdom, with clear and effusive priorities agreed, a strong collaborative approach, where different signatories participated in specific measures and targeted efforts to address the areas set out in 2017. While cash programming had momentum before the Grand Bargain was established, the initiative provided a valuable platform for coordinating and consolidating efforts between donors, the UN, NGOs and the RCRCM, contributing to a normative and operational shift towards routine use of cash programming in a humanitarian environment. Workstream 2 also performed well. The co-finalists (Switzerland and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) have made specific efforts to move the working flow away from the dialogue on definitions to the action of commitments. The workflow has identified and delivered on a number of priority measures, including on-the-spot missions and the exchange of lessons and good practices. As part of this work flow, Grand Bargain established localisation as a key normative principle of humanitarian action. While there has not yet been a system-wide shift in operational practices, evidence suggests that the Grand Bargain has helped drive progress, provide incentives and facilitate the sharing of lessons and experiences on implementing access to localisation. Workstream 9 (harmonised reporting) continued to make good progress in 2018. There was a clear focus on introducing a harmonised country-wide 8/3 reporting template, adjustments in response to the interim assessment of the pilot project and successful advocacy for an increased reintroduction of the template among signatories. The co-conveners (International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and Germany), together with the participating signatories, have had considerable success in testing the challenging assumption that a single, simplified reporting template accept and use a number of donors and aid organisations. While not the best result in terms of overall progress, many signatories found that working stream 5 (needs assessments) improved significantly as a coordination mechanism compared to 2017. Responding to the criticisms made in the second annual independent report, the co-chairmen (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), with the political support of an eminent person, stepped up efforts to address low levels of trust among signatories on this topic, pushed with some success for their increased engagement and made significant progress in key technical areas. , including joint analysis and the beginning of the identification of good practice and lessons learned on cooperation with development partners. As set out in the second annual independent report, there are common drivers of progress in these working flows: each set of co-conveners has created, with the support of signatories, an active forum with good cooperation between constituent groups, focused on clear priorities that can be taken. The investments required to suss up institutions in terms of staff time and capacity to make them successful have been significant. The available data also showed good progress by individual signatories or small groups of signatories in relation to specific obligations. More signatories than in 2017 reported funding data passed on to local and national partners, with seven reporting meeting or exceeding the 25% target, compared to five in 2017. The underlying 3.1+3.6 (Increase in routine cash use) also saw an increased activity, with a large number of signatories reporting an increase in the volume of cash programmed at country level, with some reporting institutional policy shifting towards cash as the preferred modality (unless this excluding contextual conditions). Individually,

signatories have also made good progress in relation to commitment 4.1 (Reduce costs and measure the acquired efficiency of technology assistance), with specific examples of measurable efficiency. One of the most prominent areas of progress was in relation to the core commitment of 7.1a (Increasing multiannual collaborative and flexible planning and multiannual funding), where 78% of donors reported retaining or increasing their multiannual funding in 2018, including five donors who increased the share of total humanitarian funding that was multiannual to more than 50% (United Kingdom, Belgium, The Netherlands), Canada and Germany), and two, Sweden and Norway, which provide four-year agreements on unmarked core funds to the WFP, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Relief and Rescue Agency (UNRWA) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Further progress by the two largest donors, ECHO and states, could lead to on this fundamental commitment to a system-wide change that would transform the environment of humanitarian aid funding. There is evidence that the signatories tied the thematic areas and working flows, including in relation to cash programming and social protection (work flow 3 and 10). There were numerous positive examples of cooperation between donors and organisations to help with key topics, including localisation and the participation revolution (workstream 6). Several signatories have reported their efforts to navigate or mitigate the challenges they face in meeting some of their obligations. A number of donors explained that they are actively looking for ways to support their partners' investments in innovation and technology to increase operational efficiency, with many looking for ways to increase the share of humanitarian funds that local and national responses can access, including through pooled funds and individual intermediaries. A number of aid organisations have invested significant resources in publishing their funding data to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard, despite on-going concerns about the suitability of the system. Significant progress has also been made at the country level. In relation to joint analysis and planning with development actors (commitments 5.7, 7.3 and 10.4), six UN country teams (UNCT) and humanitarian teams of countries (HCTs) worked together to develop collective outcomes based on risk and vulnerability analyses. More than half of all HCT's now have multiannual plans (core commitment 7.1a). Workstreams 2, (Localisation), 3 (Cash Programming), 5 (Needs Assessments) and 9 (Compliant Reporting) have all undertaken targeted cooperation with colleagues and other stakeholders at country level through field missions and/or the introduction of certain approaches or pilots. Signatories' self-reports list a number of country-level initiatives and results on many work-related commitments and areas, in particular localisation, cash programming, participation revolution, multiannual planning and humanitarian-development link. In Bangladesh, Lebanon, Somalia and elsewhere, national and local actors are showing greater interest and awareness of the Grand Bargain and are actively looking for ways to use the framework to improve the international humanitarian response in their countries and negotiate better relations for themselves with international humanitarian actors. In terms of gender, self-reporting points to the impressive breadth and depth of measures taken by signatories from all constituent groups to integrate considerations of gender equality and women's empowerment under the Grand Bargain. The signatories generally sought to de facto apply their existing gender promises (including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) and gender and age markers ECHO) to the commitments under the grand bargain, focus on localisation (working flow 2), cash programming (working flow 3), needs assessments (working flow 5) and, to a lesser extent, the participation revolution (working stream 6) and enhanced engagement of humanitarian and development actors (working flow 10). Remaining challenges and impact on common progress Regardless of areas of significant progress, many challenges remain for further and as difficult progress as identified in the second annual independent report. The diversity of efforts among signatories and among labour tors is still large, with wide differences in investment levels and results being achieved. Some of the practical challenges identified in the latest annual report remain, including the sheer breadth and scope of commitments and the lack of clarity in the original text of many of them. In 2018, aid organisations noted in particular that the policy and practice changes needed to meet some commitments were significant, representing large institutional investments at all levels, including the allocation of staff and funding. Despite efforts to simplify the framework and adopt a clearer focus in the fourth quarter of 2018, the Grand Bargain remained both over-managed and under-managed, creating an unnecessary burden for signatories to get involved, but without clear guidance on where their collective efforts are going. The identification of core commitments was aimed at providing focus and consolidation of joint efforts, but it is too early to assess the impact this new focus will have, and the signatories continued at their own pace, working on their own priorities and, in some areas, in their own directions. While there is more data on results in this year's reporting process, this is still limited and it is difficult to accurately assess or clearly quantify what tangible progress is being made in all commitments. Communication between working flows, between FG and the comsanunicators and between them and the wider group of signatories remains poor. Non-convener signatories or FG members struggle to find out what happens outside the work flows they regularly engage with and do not have access to or influence the bigger picture. It is essential that the working flow continued to work in silos, with little or no substantive dialogue between different collaborators on specific or general cross-cutting topics, and even the most active work flows continued to focus primarily on technical issues. Sherpalevel engagement was limited, and political dialogue between the signatories - or even within the core group of signatories - was largely absent. The main challenges for greater and greater progress remain political, and the technical solutions that many signatories and the working flow have focused on to date are unlikely to have much impact in this regard. Eminent person conducted a high-level dialogue at the end of 2018. addressing policy barriers to progress on joint needs assessments/analyses and improved risk-sharing. Despite some impact, it is clear that it is much larger, a more coherent and constructive dialogue on these and other issues is needed, including the impact of domestic policy on donor risk tolerance, on increasing transparency of aid expenditure in the chain, on identifying and addressing barriers to more flexible financing, and on reducing or mitigating the impact of reporting or meeting requirements – all issues that undermine the spirit of cooperation on which the Grand Bargain was built and on which the successful transformation of the international humanitarian aid system depends. Key questions regarding the future of the Grand Bargain highlighted in the second annual independent report, in particular on how it should be developed, adapted, further simplified or even concluded, remained unanswered. There is still no clear deadline for achieving the objectives initially set, no objectives to clarify what achieving those objectives would look like and few objectives or deadlines for individual commitments. Some signatories felt there was still not enough clarity or detail about the vision the Grand Bargain was trying to achieve. Without clarification in this regard, it is difficult to see how the necessary motivation can be fully used to encourage progression. More broadly, there is growing concern among signatories in all constituent groups about the high transaction costs associated with the implementation of the Grand Bargain. The signatories reiterated the high bureaucratic burden, the wealth of discussions and initiatives to follow, and the sheer breadth of obligations and measures necessary to meet them, as all this requires large institutional investments. Without a more tangible demonstration of the return on these investments, particularly evidence of the movement of some of the main policy issues that are stalling more progress, enthusiasm is likely to begin to weaken. Conclusions and recommendations Three years in the process, the Grand Bargain continues to attract significant institutional investment from most signatories, many of whom have devoted time to staff/staff, integrated concept and commitments into corporate strategies and policies and used the framework to shape institutional practices. Signatories continue to see grand bargain's potential as a lever for change, to address or successfully navigate long-standing challenges, and to increase efficiency and efficiency at system level. The sense of pessimism apparent during the 2017 consultation seems to have diminished, at least to some extent. There is a general consensus that the potential of the Grand Bargain has yet to be realised and that the investments carried out so far need to be sustained for at least two more years - three years before returns will be fully visible. Even there is evidence that these investments are starting to yield dividends, including contributing to a normative and operational shift in the use of cash programming, driving a normative shift towards localisation, bringing significant increases in the volume of multiannual assets available and successfully testing the idea of a harmonised reporting format. But despite the articulation of collective priorities, simplified structure and a results-oriented approach to reporting, further efforts are needed to address the underlying problems in the structure, vision and focus of the Grand Bargain to ensure it can deliver on its original promise. There is evidence that such efforts are possible – that the Grand Bargain can be developed and adapted. agreements reached on collective priorities, including within and between working flows; increasing interest in and the use of the Grand Bargain at country level; and the use of the Grand Bargain to advance existing commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment indicate that it is already evolving to some extent, albeit organically and without a clear vision. Slavish adheres to the original package of 51 commitments, with its wide range of themes, often vague formulations and lack of partial obligations, in the opinion of the authors, unlikely to bring the results to which the original group of signatories aspired. Instead, adopting a deliberately iterative approach, thinking about learning so far to further consolidate efforts and reduce bureaucracy, can help ensure that the potential of the Grand Bargain is realised. A survey conducted for this third annual independent report shows that the Grand Bargain still has added value. It is proving effective in financing major changes in localisation policy and practices and multiannual funding, and supports broader efforts to change cash programming policy and practices. It provides a single platform for strategic dialogue between donors, UN entities, NGOs and the RCRCM – a platform that does not exist elsewhere in the assistance system. It is difficult to assess the likely impact of failure to achieve, at least in part, the original ambitions of the Grand Bargain, but abandoning significant political, financial and institutional investment of such a wide range of signatories so far would likely undermine the sense of collective purpose created by the initiative, which is needed to achieve the system-wide improvement in humanitarian action that is so urgently needed. As imperfect as that may be, the Grand Bargain is probably the best vehicle currently available to bring about the kind of transformative change in the humanitarian sector aspired to by donors and aid organizations. The realisation of these ambitions will require greater and more sustainable political investment by all signatories, led by a new eminent challenges that continue to be easing progress. While acknowledging the efforts expended by the outgoing eminent, FG, the susses and a broader group of signatories to implement the recommendations of the second annual independent report, a number of recommendations from 2018 still apply today. Specific priorities for action have highlighted specific priorities for action – both material and procedural – that could help harness the momentum built over the past three years and realise the ambitions of the Grand Bargain. Adopt a strategic approach to mitigate the remaining challenges and maximise opportunities for greater progress Action: Under the guidance of an eminent person, signatories should gather at the annual meeting to identify where progress is stalling, what factors are responsible for this and what measures or investments are needed to overcome, navigate or mitigate these factors, and how to consolidate and simplify efforts to achieve these objectives. This discussion should provide at the annual meeting a draft common strategy to build on the progress already made, including harnessing the growing momentum at country level. This procedure should also set out delegated responsibilities for the measures agreed as part of the strategy. Engage in a coherent, high-level political dialogue aimed at better addressing or mitigating the challenges to success Action: FG and the su-conveners, supported by the Secretariat, should identify policy issues that slow progress within and through working flows to inform discussions on strategy development at the annual meeting. The current report can serve as the basis for this analysis, with a particular focus on issues such as: what should a more qualitative approach to support local and national responses look like (i.e. go beyond increased access to finance); how best to reduce the impact of low risk tolerance between donor countries and how to mitigate the associated impact of increased compliance requirements on aid organisations; where there are barriers to reducing flexible finance and how to take advantage of the different levels of flexibility that already exist more strategically to address shortcomings and better support priorities; and how to ensure that efforts by organisations to help improve needs assessments and analyses will result in more general allocations of donor funding. Action: FG and co-conveners should carry out a series of deep dive analyses to inform more detailed understanding and dialogue on key policy obstacles to further progress, including on the issues mentioned above. Define more clearly what the success of the Grand Bargain will look like: The original ambitions of the Grand Bargain were transformative in nature. While these ambitions should be maintained, they should also be examined with a critical eye to see what can reasonably be achieved in the next few years, taking into account the way over time, the policy of the global aid environment has also evolved since 2016. This analysis should inform the above strategy (see Recommendation 1). Action: An overview of indicators for some of the core commitments should be carried out and adjustments made to ensure that they are practical (i.e. signatories may report against them), pragmatic (i.e. signatories can access this data without investing in new, difficult data collection exercises) and useful (i.e. data collected can be used to develop a reasonable overview of collective progress). This process should aim at simplifying rather than further complicating the current progress measurement discussions. In particular, the authors recommend reviewing the underlying commitment indicators 2.4, 4.5, 6.1, 7.1a, 9.1 and 10.4 to ensure greater clarity on how/what data should be reported or adjustments to ensure that each indicator is practical, pragmatic and useful in terms of the possibility of actually measuring significant progress. Action: A more comprehensive review is due to be planned for 2021, marking five years since the launch of the Grand Bargain. This review should be based on a number of practical and pragmatic quantitative and qualitative points of analysis (e.g. funding trends, existing objectives embedded in specific commitments, Ground Truth Solutions or other perception surveys) that may provide a reasonable assessment of the progress made against the original objectives created by Grand Bargain to achieve it. The audit should be the result of evidence presented in the annual independent reports prepared from 2017 and should provide the basis for decision-making on the future of the Grand Bargain initiative. Given the scope and depth of the changes envisaged by the original group of signatories, such decisions taken earlier are unlikely to benefit or be informed by an appropriate understanding of whether the Grand Bargain has achieved its original objectives. Get the bargain back on track: Signatories should design and create appropriate incentives for measures to fulfil their obligations. In the current discourse, this focuses primarily on donors who encourage action by aid organisations, but this should be a common approach, recognising that all signatories may need incentives for significant changes in the necessary policy and practice. Key incentives for aid organisations include financing conditions or the disposal of funding for certain measures. Incentives for donors may include greater visibility in domestic and international public discourse, the use of good donor ranking systems, increased access to substantial or technical discussions between aid organisations and characterise action as global public goods. Action: Based on the initiative put forward by the Netherlands and the ICRC signatories, 2 signatories should work together to understand the risks faced by different constituent groups in or non-compliance with their obligations and how to efforts to mitigate risks can have a positive and negative impact on other constituent groups. Consolidating efforts to reduce bureaucratic burdens and better support the implementation of action commitments: FG, in full consultation with co-drivers, should consider ways to break the silo between work flows, with a view to further consolidating and sequencing efforts and reducing doubling. For example, greater synchronicity of efforts between Workstream 7+8 (Enhanced Quality Finance) and WorkStream 5 (Needs Assessment) could allow for greater harmonisation of multiannual financing of multiannual plans (Commitment 7.2), with common outcomes between humanitarian and development actors (10.4 commitments) which in turn are based on common needs and vulnerability analyses (5.7 commitment). Strategic cooperation between working flows 4, 7+8 and 9 could also provide a more holistic approach to improving the quality of funding (commitments 7.1a and 8.2/8.5), while reducing or mitigating the impact of compliance requirements by harmonising and simplifying donor reporting requirements (obligations 4.5 and 9.1). Strengthen existing governance structures to provide measures: FG capacities should be strengthened, with greater understanding among member institutions of the nature of the work and resources needed to fulfil this role (e.g. staff time); a two-year rather than an annual mandate, in order to ensure greater continuity of leadership at this level; and with greater monitoring of work flows, allowing them to crack the problems arising and provide a preliminary strategy to address them (or raise them to sherpa level as needed). Action: The role of co-workers should also be strengthened, with a clear focus on the coordination and leadership of inclusive efforts (i.e. in all signatory groups) in order to achieve commitments from the relevant thematic areas and an obligation on the signatory institution acting as a co-contractor to provide the necessary sustainable and dedicated staff resources to carry out this function within a reasonable period. An administrative procedure should also be agreed to allow the co-chairpers to step down from the role and, where appropriate/wish, transfer responsibility to other signatories. Action: The secretariat's capacity (i.e. with an increase in staffing levels) should be significantly increased in order to better support the work of FG, the su-convener and the signatories. As a priority, additional staff are needed in the Secretariat to increase communication through work flows; assisting FG in solving problems within and through the work flow; and ensuring greater exchange of information between signatories, between them both governance and leadership structures, and between the Collective Signatories of the Great Treaty and other key stakeholders, including at country level. Strengthening political leadership to help manage the remaining challenges and achieve success Action: Building on work first eminent, the new incumbent should strengthen and further elaborate the original vision of the Grand Bargain, directing signatories to work together to realise its full potential and ensuring that it remains relevant and delivers the original bargain. In view of Recommendations 1 and 3, the new eminent person should lead the signatories in adopting a more iterative approach to achieving the original objectives – an approach that capitalises on the organic evolution of the framework so far, which is informed by an analysis of changes in the wider geopolitical environment and which confirms the reality of the multilateral initiative of this kind and the need to respond to different opinions, capacities and interests. After that, the new eminent will also have to build on the targeted engagement of the first eminent person to encourage action at the highest political levels on key essential issues, including greater progress in improving the flexibility and predictability of humanitarian funding and addressing the challenges posed by donor compliance requirements. Action: A core group of sherpas should be established, in particular those who have the time and patience to focus on the role and who represent different working flows and components in order to encourage progress in relation to the above strategy (see Recommendation 1). Working on the basis of a clear division of the workforce between the new eminent person and in close coordination with her, this group should seek to strengthen its efforts, allowing progress at different levels and on a number of issues highlighted in this report. With the powers granted by the other signatories, this core group should work in particular together to provide policy guidance on addressing cross-cutting issues, support a new eminent person in addressing policy challenges that undermine progress in multiple working flows and enable signatories to seize opportunities to make collective progress. As a specific priority, this core group should focus on ensuring a coordinated approach to the integration of the humanitarian-development nexus under the Grand Bargain, directing collaborators and signatories on related political issues and finding pragmatic ways to navigate obstacles that cannot be removed and/or mitigate their impact on signatories' efforts to fulfil commitments. Certain members of this core group may also be labeled champions, providing crucial and consistent leadership on certain issues between cuts or work flows that would benefit from increased political investment to unblock barriers and encourage more progress. Progress.