

- Countries facing humanitarian crises
- Countries facing food emergencies
- Countries facing enforced displacement of population
- Countries included in the CAP 2008 or with flash appeals

5. Humanitarian crises and humanitarian action

- The number of people affected by food insecurity increased by 40 million in 2008.
- The United Nations launched a record humanitarian appeal - 7,000 million dollars - to help 30 million people.
- The violence in North Kivu, DR Congo, caused the displacement of 250,000 people in three months.
- More than 140,000 people died from the effects of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar.
- The absence of security and resettlement support programmes hampered the return of thousands of displaced persons in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Nepal, Uganda and Sudan.

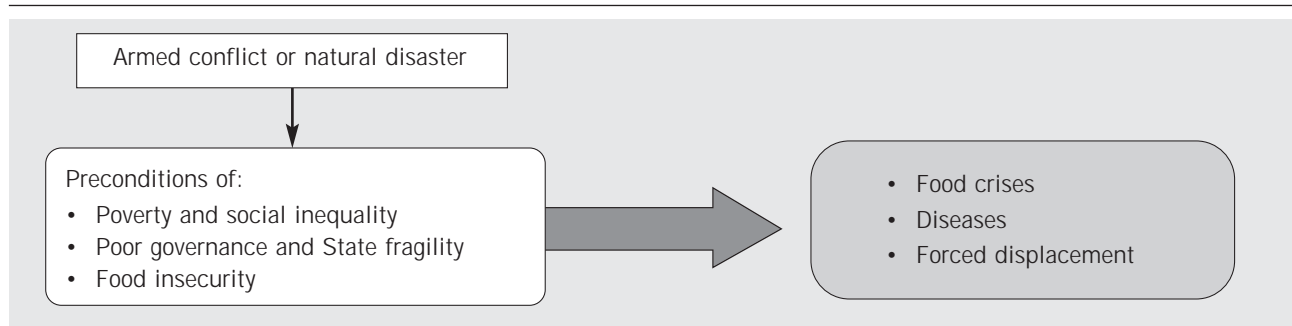
This section analyses the situation concerning humanitarian crisis scenarios and humanitarian action, paying special attention to contexts of violence. The first part deals with the definition of humanitarian crisis and analyses the indicators that have helped determine which countries have faced a crisis situation during 2008. The second part examines the development of each of these contexts, grouped by regions. The third part reviews the most important aspects of humanitarian action practices over the year. A map is attached at the beginning of the chapter with the countries affected by humanitarian crises.

5.1. Humanitarian Crisis: definition and indicators

A **humanitarian crisis** is understood as a situation where there is an exceptional and generalised threat to human life, health or subsistence. Such crises usually appear in a situation where there has been vulnerability and where a series of pre-existing factors (poverty, inequality, lack of access to basic services) become aggravated by the detonating factor of a natural disaster or armed conflict, multiplying their destructive effects.

Since the end of the Cold War a type of humanitarian crisis known as complex emergency has proliferated. These phenomena, also known as **complex political emergencies**, are man-made crises where a situation of violence generates deaths, forced displacement, epidemics and famines. These are combined with a weakening or total collapse of economic and political structures and, sometimes, with the presence of a natural disaster. Complex emergencies are differentiated from crises because they last longer. They also have a fundamentally political origin and a considerable destructive and destructuring impact on all aspects of life. Consequently, the response to these crises usually involves a large number of agents in addition to the exclusively humanitarian ones. This includes peace-keeping missions and political and diplomatic agents. The analysis mainly focuses on humanitarian crises generated in contexts of armed violence, which, to a degree, determined the final number of emergency situations detected.

Figure 5.1. Development of a humanitarian crisis



Four indicators have been used in this section, which have served to determine the countries that have faced a humanitarian crisis situation in 2008.

Firstly, the reports published periodically by FAO on harvest prospects and food security, which indicate the existence of 44 countries where there was a food emergency in 2008 (indicator no. 5). Of the total in this group, 21 were in Africa, 13 in Asia, six in America, two in Europe and one in the Middle East. The resulting figure matches up with the balance for the previous year, although the increase in the number of countries affected by the high cost of food in the Asian region (from 10 to 13) should be highlighted. Meanwhile, in Africa there was a slight reduction compared to the previous year (from 27 to 21). The seriousness of the food crises was heightened during the year by the persistent increase in food prices, which hindered the access to food of the population.¹ Along these lines, the overall number of people depending on food aid increased by 40 million in 2008 (a total of 963 million according to FAO), and the rise in food and fuel prices generated financial problems for the main agencies and NGOs in charge of food aid. Of these 44 countries, 29 needed international assistance to feed their population during the whole year.

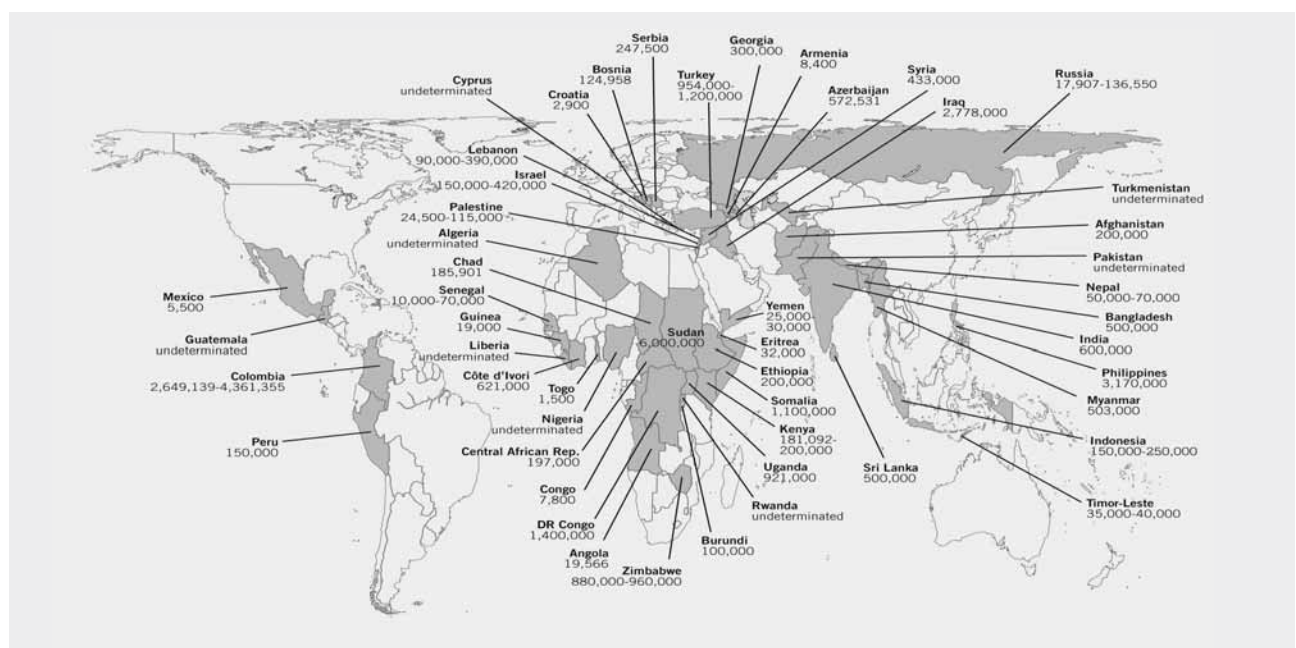
Secondly, the evolution of the internal displacement phenomena (indicator no. 6) is taken into account, in relation to people displaced within the borders of a country by the effect of violence. The report published

by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) analysing internal displacement during 2007 indicated that,² for the first time since the nineties, the number of people affected exceeded 26 million, a trend that continued during 2008. However, this increase took place not because of greater flows of internal displacement but because of the difficulty in achieve stable solutions for displaced persons, either through return or resettlement. In 2007, Africa continued to be the continent worst affected by internal displacement, with 12.7 million displaced persons in 19 countries, although the biggest percentage increase was registered in the Middle East —30% more than in the previous year— due to the armed conflict in Iraq. Insecurity, lack of basic services and job prospects were some of the main causes making it difficult for IDPs to return. Other reasons included the deliberate action of governments and armed groups to prevent the population returning, as in the cases of Colombia and Sudan (Darfur).

During 2008, 52 countries recorded internal displacements, two more than in 2007, due to the post-electoral violence in Kenya and the armed conflict in South Ossetia (Georgia). The most serious cases, where displacement affects one in 100 people, moved from 24 to 23. The IDMC pointed out the persistent deficiencies in the assistance to people affected by displacement due to incompatibility between the political and humanitarian agendas in the same country, the lack of

The overall number of people depending on food aid increased by 40 million in 2008

Mapa 5.1. Number of internally displaced persons in 2008³



1. Although food prices dropped during the last months of the year on the international markets, the effect of the price reduction was not perceived in local markets.
2. The IDMC report published in June 2008 refers to data from 2007. However, the data is considered representative of displacement trends in 2008, as it is complemented with updates made by the centre (figures and context analyses) and the monitoring made by the Escola de Cultura de Pau of the international situation during the year.
3. Drawn up based on IDMC data, updated to December 2008 <<http://www.internal-displacement.org/>>.

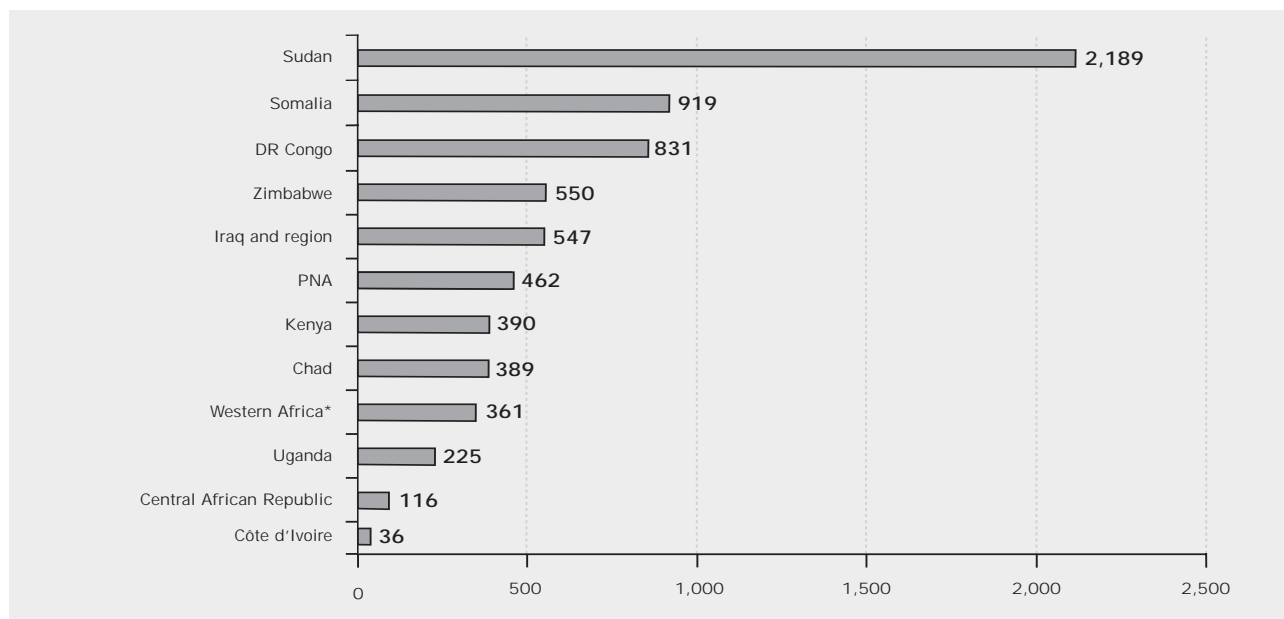
quick and efficient action, and a general failure to include national NGOs in protection cluster. Concerning the situation by regions, **Sub-Saharan Africa was the worst affected, with 20 countries (of which nine were in a very serious situation), followed by the Asian continent with 11 countries and then Europe with nine, the Middle East with six and America with four countries.**

The third indicator, concerning the **number of refugees recorded by the UNHCR (indicator no. 7)**, showed a considerable increase in the number of people under the agency's protection, following the increasing trend of 2006.⁴ In 2007, the overall figure rose from 9.9 million to 11.3 million, an increase of 15.31%. The countries of origin with the largest number of refugees were Afghanistan (3.1 million) and Iraq (2.3 million). Together, they represent practically half of the overall refugee population in the world. After them come Colombia (552,000), Sudan (523,000) and Somalia (457,000). In its report, the UNHCR underlined that 80% of refugees seek asylum in their same region, so Pakistan, Syria and Iran were the countries receiving the largest numbers of them, largely Afghans and Iraqis. 4.7 million people of Palestinian origin under the protection of UNRWA must be added to the total

figures. The **situations considered as being severe**, in which at least one in every 100 people in a country is a refugee, **increased slightly from 14 to 17 countries**, as well as the number of **countries with a large refugee population increased to 67**, two more than during 2006. The majority of refugee situations considered as severe continued to take place in Africa: specifically nine of the 17 existing worldwide.

Finally, the fourth indicator applied is the **Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) (indicator no. 8)**,⁵ used by the United Nations to demand funds for the situations of humanitarian crisis it considers most serious or which require more international assistance.⁶ In 2008, OCHA launched **10 appeals requesting 3,800 million dollars, which would provide aid to 25 million people in 24 countries.** At the end of the year, the donor community had pledged an average of only 69% of the funds requested for these emergencies. According to the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, this left programmes without finance. During the year there were also **11 flash appeals**,⁷ four fewer than in 2007, of which eight were emitted in relation to humanitarian emergencies caused by the impact of natural disasters. On the other hand, the flash appeals

Graph 5.1. United Nations Humanitarian Appeal for 2009 (millions of dollars)



Source: United Nations, *Humanitarian Appeal 2009*, United Nations, November 2008.

(*) Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

4. The UNHCR report published in June 2008 refers to the agency's overall data for January to December 2007. However, the data is considered to be representative of the refugee situation in 2008, as it is complemented with the monitoring of the international situation during the year carried out by the Escola de Culture de Pau, showing the persistence of the same situation.
5. Annual appeal to donors via the United Nations system. This is a programmatic cycle meant for humanitarian organisations to plan, coordinate, finance, implement and monitor the response to disasters and emergencies in consultation with Governments.
6. In the second section of the chapter, an analysis is established of the trends in finance from donor countries, both in the context of the CAP and with respect to global humanitarian aid.
7. Flash appeals are those launched by Governments via the United Nations in order to provide a response to a humanitarian emergency. They last for six months but can be extended.

for Georgia, Kenya and Pakistan arose from the need to provide a response to the impact of armed violence in these countries during 2008. In addition, Iraq made an annual appeal in February corresponding to the same logic as the CAP. **For 2009, OCHA asked for 7,000 million dollars, almost the double of the figure for 2008, to provide aid to 30 million people in 31 countries.** Iraq and Kenya appeared for the first time in the CAP, while Sudan was the country requesting the largest quantity of funds, for the second consecutive year —more than 2,000 million dollars.

Box 5.1. Countries facing humanitarian crises during 2008

Afghanistan	Georgia	Palestine
Armenia	Haiti	Philippines
Azerbaijan	Iraq	Russia
Burundi	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Central African Rep.	Lesotho	Somalia
Chad	Liberia	Sri Lanka
Colombia	Mali	Sudan
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritania	Swaziland
DR Congo	Myanmar	Timor-Leste
DPR Korea	Nepal	Uganda
Eritrea	Niger	Yemen
Ethiopia	Pakistan	Zimbabwe

Making an assessment of the data obtained from the four indicators based on the information collected during the year by the Escola de Cultura de Pau, it is considered that **36 countries suffered a humanitarian crisis during 2008**, reducing the number of crisis situations by eight compared to the previous report. However, this notable reduction should not be associated with an improvement in the overall humanitarian situation, as the majority of the crises monitored in this chapter worsened severely during the year. **The humanitarian situation in Angola, Madagascar, Guinea, Tanzania, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Indonesia, which appeared as crises in the Alerta 2008 report, ceased to**

be shown as emergencies this year. It was considered that the levels of vulnerability of the population corresponded to the lack of progress in the achievement of development in the country but that the characteristics of a humanitarian crisis were not present. On the other hand, **Pakistan emerged as a new humanitarian crisis** due to the serious situation of displacement generated by the armed conflict on the border with Afghanistan.

5.2. Evolution of humanitarian crises

During the year, Africa continued to be the region worst affected by humanitarian crises, with 19 of the total of 36 (52%), followed by Asia-Pacific region (22%), Europe, Middle East and America. Concerning the **evolution** of the various crises, the relative **improvements achieved in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Timor-Leste** were overshadowed by the impact of the food insecurity in the three countries. **Scenarios such as DR Congo, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Haiti, Myanmar and Zimbabwe underwent a clear deterioration** compared to 2007. The situation in countries such as Sudan, Iraq and Sierra Leone, remained stable during 2008, in spite of its seriousness.

Africa

The combined effects of the natural disasters, the increase in food prices, political instability and the impact of armed conflicts once again made Africa the region worst affected by humanitarian crises at global level. The food insecurity not only increased the number of people suffering from famine, but also put at risk the millions of people affected by HIV/AIDS on the continent, as good nutrition is vital for the effectiveness of treatment. Various regional bodies, such as the SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD, generated strategies to tackle the impact of food crisis on the population. Even so, the

Box 5.2. Radiography of outstanding humanitarian crises in 2008

AFRICA:

- **Chad:** The attacks against humanitarian personnel meant that their work had to be suspended, increasing the vulnerability of the displaced persons and refugees in the east.
- **Zimbabwe:** Half the population depended on foreign food aid to meet their needs.

AMERICA:

- **Haiti:** The effects of the succession of hurricanes submerged the country on the food insecurity and generated the first deaths related to malnourishment.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- **Afghanistan:** The extension of violence to other areas beyond the south of the country led to thousands of returning refugees being unable to resettle, turning them into internally displaced persons.
- **Pakistan:** Humanitarian organisations warned of the difficulty in accessing the areas most affected by violence in the North-West Frontier Province, where 60% of the population was forcibly displaced this year.

EUROPE:

- **Georgia:** The Russian-Georgian border conflict in South Ossetia generated a new humanitarian crisis in Europe.

MIDDLE EAST:

- **Palestine:** The Israeli blockade against Gaza constituted a violation of International Humanitarian Law and was classified by the United Nations as a "collective punishment".

Horn of Africa was, once again, the area most affected by famine, particularly Ethiopia, while DR Congo and Somalia stood out as the most serious humanitarian crises on the continent.

a) Southern Africa

Countries	Crisis factors
Lesotho	Natural disasters, HIV/AIDS
Swaziland	Natural disasters, HIV/AIDS
Zimbabwe	Political and economic crisis, HIV/AIDS

The torrential rains recorded during the first months of the year in the southern region affected more than a million people and threatened the agricultural production, aggravating the food insecurity in the area. For this reason, the region put out an appeal in February to create a prevention and response plan covering everything from the establishment and strengthening of early warning systems to investment in crop recovery, in order to minimise the damage. At the end of the year, only 28% of the money required had been collected, showing the lack of commitment from donor countries to support long-term action. The impact of the drought and the increase in prices led 20% of the population of **Lesotho** and **Swaziland** suffering from food insecurity, despite the increase in agricultural production in the latter. According to a UNICEF study, the drought led to an increase in the proportion of the population without access to drinking water in Lesotho from 21% to 30% in only a year. Meanwhile, the Government of Swaziland suggested moving the population away from the worst affected areas because of the lack of rain in the country.

The humanitarian situation in **Zimbabwe** seriously worsened during the year, largely due to the impact of political decisions on humanitarian action and the manipulation of aid by the Government, as well as the gradual deterioration of the health system and basic services. The galloping inflation put food out of reach of almost half the population —five million people— who depended on foreign aid to meet their nutritional needs. The President, Robert Mugabe, declared NGO activities to be suspended in May, accusing the organisations of lack of neutrality and of supporting the opposition, which only contributed to making the situation worse. The serious cholera epidemic [in Zimbabwe], which began in August and, in only four months, caused the deaths of more than 1,600 people, was the final result of the Government continued negligence. For this reason, the strategies adopted by the international community to put pressure on political leaders to reach a power-sharing agreement should not be based on restrictions on the sending of humanitarian aid, as South Africa announced it was intended to do. These measures could still further damage the poorest groups of population without achieving their aim.

The serious cholera epidemic in Zimbabwe was the final result of the Government continued negligence

b) West Africa

Countries	Crisis factors
Côte d'Ivoire	Political and economic crisis, return of displaced persons
Liberia	Post-war situation, return of displaced persons
Sahel (Mauritania, Mali and Niger)	Situation of tension, political and economic crisis, natural disasters
Sierra Leone	Post-war situation, return of displaced persons

The regional stability was affected by the demonstrations occurring in several countries where the population demanded a response from Governments to rising prices and the lack of access to food. ECOWAS implemented several strategies at regional level, while Governments like those of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire adopted measures which, to a degree, counteracted the affects of the crisis. Meanwhile, the periodical flooding in the area particularly affected Liberia, although the impact was much less than that recorded in 2007.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the return of the people displaced by the conflict continued thanks to the improvement in security conditions. Although there are no exact figures, IDMC estimated that at least 89,000 people returned during 2008. However, reintegration efforts were affected by food insecurity and inter-communitarian clashes. A survey carried out by United Nations' agencies detected alarming levels of acute malnutrition in the north of the country, contrasting with the shutdown of operations by MSF-France, which considered that the emergency situation had ended. Meanwhile, in **Sierra Leone and Liberia** strategies were implemented to reduce the gaps in assistance that may appear when passing from a humanitarian emergency situation to a development and rehabilitation one in the country. This did not prevent that vulnerability indices sometimes become equal to or worse than humanitarian emergency situations.

The **Sahel** region suffered the impact of flooding in August, largely affecting northern Niger and Mali, where fighting between the Tuareg insurgents and the Armed Forces increased the displacement and food insecurity in the area. The region of Agadez (northern **Niger**) suffered from the effects of the conflict, making it difficult to assist the population and cutting agricultural production, which was severely damaged. In addition, MSF was obliged to abandon its work in Maradi (north) after it was accused by the Government of conniving with the Tuareg rebels. However, in **Mali**, the peace negotiations and policies adopted by the Government to deal with the food insecurity managed to alleviate the situation. The UN head of humanitarian affairs, John Holmes, visited the Sahel region to alert of the negative impact climate change, insecurity and drug trafficking were having on development achievements in the area.

c) Horn of Africa

Countries	Crisis factors
Eritrea	Situation of tension, natural disasters, forced displacement
Ethiopia	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement
Somalia	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement
Sudan	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement

At the beginning of the year, IGAD warned that 14 million could suffer from food insecurity in the Horn of Africa during 2008. The increase in food prices and the worsening of the conflicts in the area, particularly in Somalia, were added to the lack of rain, mainly affecting Eritrea and Ethiopia. In Eritrea, UNICEF detected an alarming increase in levels of child malnutrition, while OCHA warned of an increase in the number of people displaced by drought, although the true figure for those affected by this situation is not known. Meanwhile, in Ethiopia the United Nations estimated that, by 2009, more than 10 million people could be suffering from famine, although during 2008 the estimates of the numbers of people affected by lack of food ranged between 4.7 million, according to governmental sources, and 6.8 million, according to Oxfam.

In Darfur displaced persons are exposed daily to extortion, violence and recruitment, leading civilians to devise protection strategies and self-defence groups

In Somalia the armed conflict situation led to practically half the population —3.25 million people— depending on foreign aid, 77% more than at the beginning of the year. Along these lines, a group of 52 NGOs made an appeal to the international community to commit itself to protecting the civilian population, issuing a reminder that the figures for internally displaced persons exceeded one-and-a-half million. Meanwhile, humanitarian work was seriously affected by violence, the plundering of humanitarian convoys and attacks on humanitarian workers. This led, among other things, to the death of the director of the UNDP in the country. Many areas were isolated by the violence, increasing the vulnerability of the civilian population. Finally, in

Sudan, the violence continued to generate displacement in the Darfur region as well as confrontations in the Abyei oil-producing region (centre). Displaced persons' camps were also once again targets for attacks by militias and the Army. The attacks against humanitarian convoys, staff and installations were continuous, despite the fact that access to the Darfur region ostensibly improved with the Army's commitment to streamline the processing of permits for humanitarian workers. The armed opposition groups, meeting in Geneva under the auspices of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, had also committed themselves not to obstruct humanitarian work. Meanwhile, the United Nations warned of the

increase in numbers of deaths from malnutrition in the south-east of the country in September and its inability to access the areas affected by the rains.

Box 5.3. The militarisation of IDP camps in Sudan

The attacks perpetrated by the Armed Forces against IDP camps during 2007 and 2008, causing hundreds of victims and violating the IHL, have demonstrated the Government's interest in dismantling what it considers to be support networks for the rebel movements. Under the accusation that the camps are hiding weapons and people connected with the armed groups, the Armed Forces attacked Kalma camp in August, where more than 90,000 displaced persons live, killing 48 people. But is there any truth in Khartoum's accusations?

A Small Arms Survey report concluded that "although the camps where the civilians of Darfur are located are generally not militarised, this does not mean they are neutral humanitarian space".⁸ The situation of insecurity has led to the emergence of complex networks controlled by people close to the armed groups, providing security and decision-making capacity within the camps in exchange for loyalty. According to data from the Human Rights Council, there are 81 IDP camps in Darfur, of which only 21 are planned. The others are to some degree improvised. The level of vulnerability to armed activity and to militarisation, as a means of self-defence, of their residents varies depending on whether these camps are in areas under the control of the Government or armed groups, and whether they are close to the Chad border or in remote rural areas.

According to the data collected by the Small Arms Survey in its research, displaced persons are exposed daily to extortion, violence and recruitment, leading civilians to devise protection strategies and self-defence groups. Meanwhile, the priority given by the international community to the deployment of peace-keeping forces in Darfur has not managed to reduce the insecurity. On the contrary, it has increased by the priority given in negotiations to the leaders of the armed movements over leaders of the civilian population. In this sense, the need to hold a weapon to have voice at the negotiating table has led to the emergence of more armed groups and the fragmentation of the existing ones, with armed actions and Army responses multiplying. Along these lines, achieving the security, stability and neutrality of IDP camps in Darfur will depend on the ability to develop better strategies for prevention and protection going beyond the presence of blue helmets in the region.

8. Kahn, C. *Conflict, arms and militarization: the dynamic of Darfur's IDP camps*. Small Arms Survey, September 2008, at <http://www.small-armsurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/sudan/Sudan_pdf/SWP-15-Conflict-Arms-Militarization.pdf>

d) Great Lakes and Central Africa

Countries	Crisis factors
Burundi	Post-war situation, return of displaced population
Central African Republic	Armed conflict, forced displacement
Chad	Armed conflict, regional instability, forced displacement
DR Congo	Armed conflict, forced displacement, epidemics
Kenya	Situation of tension, natural disasters, internal displacement
Uganda	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement

The region was the scenario for one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world, originally caused by the escalation of the conflict in the North Kivu region, in the east of DR Congo. In addition, the situation of violence seriously affected the provision of aid to the population in areas like eastern Chad and the Central African Republic. Meanwhile, the return of the population displaced by the conflicts in **Uganda** and **Burundi** aggravated the lack of services in the returning areas and the insufficiency of funds offered by donor countries to facilitate resettlement. This situation was worsened by poor harvests and food insecurity, leading to an increase in inter-community confrontations for the control of land. In addition, the persistent presence of armed groups in northern Uganda and eastern Burundi and the failure to reach peace agreements with them inhibited the return of hundreds of thousands of people, who remained in transit centres. The situation of political violence in **Kenya** at the beginning of the year also caused the displacement of more than 350,000 people. Poor management of aid by the government and cases of corruption affected the effectiveness of aid work. The instability and insecurity on the country's roads had a negative effect on the distribution of aid from various humanitarian organisations and agencies to the interior of the continent, as their main supply centres were in this country.

Meanwhile, in **Chad** and the **Central African Republic**, the situation of the internally displaced persons deteriorated seriously due to the persistent attacks against camps and humanitarian installations and personnel. This forced the interruption of emergency interventions several times during the year. The presence of the EUFOR military operation on the border between the two countries did not contribute to improving security in the area. UNICEF noted in Chad that levels of acute malnutrition were similar throughout the country, requiring a humanitarian operation at national level, not only with the population of displaced persons and refugees in the east. In addition, the dispersion of the internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic (the first camp to host people displaced by violence was opened only this year) posed great challenges for aid. According to data from the Norwegian Refugee Council, 50% of the displaced

persons in the country are children, suffering from serious vulnerability.

At the beginning of the year, the organisation International Rescue Committee pointed out that, since 1998, 5.8 million people had died in **DR Congo** from the combined effects of the armed conflict and the humanitarian crisis, largely because of lack of medical care or access to food and basic services. The worsening of the violence in the province of North Kivu from August led to the displacement of 250,000 people, 100,000 of them in a single week. The majority of the people affected stayed with relatives. However, a large number of improvised IDP camps emerged in areas with difficult access, suffering from great insecurity in the face of communities' incapability of absorbing the flow of people displaced. The commitment achieved in November with the leader of the CNDP, Laurent Nkunda, to establish a humanitarian corridor in the area facilitating aid for the population had a relative impact, given that the situation of insecurity because of continuous fighting also impeded the access of the humanitarian workers to many areas. In overall figures, the number of people affected by internal displacement in DR Congo was fixed at 1.4 million, of whom a million were in North Kivu.

America

Countries	Crisis factors
Colombia	Armed conflict, forced displacement
Haiti	Political and economic crisis, natural disasters

On the American continent, Colombia and Haiti continued to be the biggest contexts of humanitarian crisis, with the situation of the population worsening in both cases. Firstly, in **Colombia**, the displaced persons' organisation CODHES pointed out that, during the first half of the year, 279,657 people had been displaced — 41% more than the previous year— becoming the biggest wave of displacement recorded in the past two decades. These figures were denied by the government, but it did admit that its own records were incomplete as they did not count urban displaced persons and those displaced by the State security forces or unidentified paramilitary groups. According to a study by the Civil Society Monitoring Committee, only 8% of the displaced persons registered on Government lists had suitable accommodation. It identified the lack of housing meeting minimum standards as the main concern of people who had been displaced. UNHCR, meanwhile, welcomed the agreement reached with the Ministry of Agriculture to promote the access of displaced persons to land.

The impact of the latest hurricane season on **Haiti** left a balance of more than 500 dead and once again demonstrated the country's great vulnerability to natural disasters. Harvests were devastated, increasing the food insecurity, leading the WFP to increase its assistance from 800,000 to 2.3 million people next year. The most affected area, Gonaïves, was cut off by the heavy rain, while NGOs like MSF highlighted the poor

management of the crisis, pointing out that, five weeks after the storms, the population remained without access to the most basic services. The lack of supplies led to deaths from malnutrition at Belle Anse. Faced with this situation, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, indicated that it was the worst disaster the country had suffered in the last 100 years. Despite the constant calls for help, the flash appeal issued by the Government to alleviate the effects of the hurricanes had obtained only 47% of what had been asked for three months after it was launched. Meanwhile, the protests over the high price of food and fuel, which sometimes turned violent, led to the sacking of the prime minister and generated a serious institutional crisis which paralysed measures for counteracting the food crisis.

UNICEF warned that 600 Afghan children aged under five die every day from preventable diseases

in Bajaur since October. According to data from the UNHCR, 168,000 people remained displaced in North-West Frontier Province, while about 20,000 were moved from the Afghan province of Kunar, most of them housed by family members. The Afghan refugee camp Kacha Garhi, in Peshawar, was used by the UNHCR to offer settlement to almost 60,000 displaced persons. The conditions of the population in the displacement areas were worrying, due to the lack of access by humanitarian organisations. The peace agreement signed in this province did not manage to halt the violence which, by the middle of the year, had displaced 60% of the population, according to the IDMC.

Undoubtedly the most serious devastation scenario in the Asian region and, probably, the natural disaster with the biggest impact during the year was the Cyclone Nargis in **Myanmar**, which caused the deaths of more than 140,000 people in May. The number of victims was possibly increased by the slow and limited response of the Government in the days following the tragedy, when it prohibited access to the most affected area (southern Irrawaddy Delta) to humanitarian organisations, claiming it was protecting the country's sovereignty. Only the good offices of the UN Secretary General and intensive diplomatic activity by ASEAN managed to convince the Junta of the need to establish mechanisms for managing the humanitarian disaster. The complete destruction of the main communication routes also made it more difficult to deliver aid. Many government agents were denounced for charging illegal taxes and for other kind of abuses against the civilian population benefiting from aid. More than 1.7 million people received assistance, despite which, the emergency appeal launched by the United Nations and NGOs collected barely half of the funds requested. Even so, the quick action in distributing drinking water managed to prevent the spread of epidemics in the affected area. This serious situation contributed to making the position of the displaced ethnic Karen population on the Thai border even more invisible during 2008. Here, more than 500,000 people were suffering from serious lack of protection.

Asia and the Pacific

Countries	Crisis factors
Afghanistan	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement
DPR Korea	Economic crisis, natural disasters
Myanmar	Armed conflict, forced displacement, epidemics
Nepal	Post-war situation, natural disasters, return of displaced population
Pakistan	Armed conflict, forced displacement
Philippines	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement
Sri Lanka	Armed conflict, natural disasters, forced displacement
Timor-Leste	Post-war situation, return of displaced population

In **Afghanistan**, the deterioration of the humanitarian situation was made clear with the spread of the conflict to other areas of the country and the intensification of the bombing, which multiplied the figures of displacement among the civilian population. Among the displaced persons there were also families of returned refugees who could not remain in or reach their original locality due to insecurity and violence. The access of the humanitarian organisations was seriously hampered by the increase in attacks against their workers, highlighting the dangerous confusion between military and humanitarian operations on the ground. The lack of coordination between the different organisations and agencies was highlighted by the UN's head of humanitarian affairs, John Holmes, as another of the main obstacles to the delivery of aid. At the end of the year, the number of people dependent on humanitarian aid exceeded four million, while UNICEF warned that 600 Afghan children aged under five die every day from preventable diseases.

Meanwhile, in **Pakistan** the conflict in the tribal areas led to the displacement of more than 190,000 people

Nepal and **DPR Korea** were seriously affected by the increase in grain prices due to their great dependency on food imports, which meant that eight million and six million people, respectively, suffered from food insecurity. Humanitarian organisations warned that famine rates were approaching those suffered by DPR Korea in the nineties. Meanwhile, IDP organisations and the Norwegian Refugee Council criticised Nepali Government delays in the implementation of measures to protect rights and achieve durable solutions for people affected by displacement. Between 35,000 and 50,000 internally displaced persons remained unable to return to their places of origin. The reason, as various local and international organisations complained throughout the year, was the Government's refusal to recognise most of them as internally displaced persons, which meant they had no right to receive an initial aid package. For their part, the humanitarian organisations warned of access difficulties in the Terai region, point-

Box 5.4. Cyclone Nargis: the opening of "humanitarian dialogue" with the Burmese government

The first reaction of the Burmese government, preventing the entrance of humanitarian organisations and personnel from Western countries into areas devastated by Cyclone Nargis in May, was widely publicised by the media. However, the change in attitude by the Military Junta in the following months, providing the humanitarian agents with an unprecedented level of access thanks to the diplomatic work of the United Nations and ASEAN, did not come across. The cooperation between the Junta and the organizations on the ground was also positive. Beyond the reasons that may be behind this lack of information, it is important to highlight the way that the beginning of dialogue between international institutions and the Burmese Junta managed, for humanitarian reasons, to obtain a more flexible response from a system known for being closed and rigid.

It is wrong to consider the Military Junta as a monolithic body. As reports from the International Crisis Group and Refugees International have pointed out,⁹ within the Government there are ministers who showed themselves to be determined to make access to the area possible for humanitarian organisations. These senior figures opposed the isolationist positions of the more conservative sector which tried, unsuccessfully, to increase controls over aid. Along these lines, all the humanitarian organisations providing assistance in Myanmar praised the work done by the Tripartite Core Group—made up of representatives of ASEAN, the United Nations and the Burmese Military Junta—in effectively resolving situations of disagreement related to the provision of aid. Equally, the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA), led by ASEAN, was highlighted as the first independent assessment on overall needs it has been possible to draw up in the country. The opening of six ASEAN offices in the Irrawaddy Delta region will make greater openness possible and will reduce the possibility that aid is diverted.

There is the risk that during 2009 the majority of donors might change their perception of the situation in Myanmar, moving from an emergency situation to one of long-term recovery and reducing the number of contributions, as generally happens in these cases. According to several analysts, the smaller quantity of funds could mean the more pro-openness ministers losing relative power to the isolationists, so the strategic impact of aid should be considered. This should be done, above all, because failure to re-establish ways of life, production and security in the affected areas would increase the vulnerability of the population of the country as a whole (the worst affected area is known as the breadbasket of Myanmar). Several analysts maintain that capacity to remain in contact with the Burmese leaders and maintain a fluid dialogue with them could present an opportunity to initiate political change or, at least, to make it possible to advance socio-economic development strategies in the country. However, the holding of the constitutional referendum immediately after Nargis and the continuation of military operations, in the regions with ethnic minorities, lead to doubts over the possibility that there will be advances towards democracy in the short or medium term.

ing out that these were greater than the ones they had faced during the armed conflict which ended in the country in 2007.

In the **Philippines** the breaking off of dialogue between the Government and the MILF armed group and the restarting of military activities in August led to the displacement of more than 400,000 people on Mindanao. In addition, in December, the spread of fighting to the islands of Jolo and Basilan led to the displacement of more than 35,000 people, according to government sources. The Natural Disaster Coordinating Council reported in December that about 58,000 people were receiving aid in IDP camps on Mindanao, while around 250,000 were being assisted outside these facilities. In **Sri Lanka**, the breach of the ceasefire agreement and the renewed confrontations between the Army and the LTTE led to around 230,000 people being displaced. They also suffered the devastating effects of the monsoon. On 16 September, a Government directive forced UN agencies and NGOs to leave the region of Vanni (north), putting at risk the life of tens of thousands of people. Aid could only be restored in October. Finally, in **Timor-Leste** UN agencies and the Government attempted to

encourage the return of internally displaced persons in Dili. At the end of the year, 90% had returned to their homes, while 15,000 remained in 16 IDP camps which the Executive plans to close in February 2009. However, several community leaders warned that tensions between the returnees and residents were increasing because the former were enjoying greater access to resources (aid for return offered by the State and aid organisations) in a situation of food insecurity that was affecting all the population equally.

Europe

Countries	Crisis factors
Russia (Chechnya)	Armed conflict, forced displacement
Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia)	Armed conflict, forced displacement

In the **Caucasus** region, the situation of people internally displaced by the Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya and South Ossetia conflicts continued to be worrying, in the absence of definitive solutions. Along these lines, the

9. International Crisis Group. *Myanmar after Nargis: time to normalise aid relations*. Asia report no. 161, 20 October 2008; and Refugees International. "Burma: building upon success". *Bulletin* 5, September 2008.

impulse given by the Azeri and Russian governments for the resettlement of part of this population continue to be insufficient and marked by political motives that have little to do with providing a response to the general situation of vulnerability. A report from the IDMC pointed out the great difficulties of displaced persons of Chechen origin in accessing public services and registering their residence in Russia. More than 136,000 people are still displaced in this country dating from the start of the conflict in Chechnya.

The armed conflict which broke out in August in **Georgia**, in a Government attempt to recover control of the South Ossetia region (enjoying *de facto* independence since the nineties), generated the displacement of more than 190,000 people. Of these, at least 24,000 —largely Georgians resident in the province— have not been able to return to their homes because of the persistently insecure situation, according to an Amnesty International report.¹⁰ In October, the World Bank, the European Commission and the United Nations drew up a joint assessment of needs following the armed conflict. They planned a long-term action —over three years— that would go beyond humanitarian aid, on an attempt to achieve the economic stability of the country as a whole. Based on this assessment, the Georgian Government launched a 450 million dollar appeal at the donor conference held in October in Brussels. The Council of Europe showed its concern over the persistent difficulties in accessing certain areas of South Ossetia and the Georgian border and the lack of presence by security forces to protect the returnees. Meanwhile, the organisation praised the rapid action of the Georgian government in alleviating the situation of the new displaced persons, but pointed out that the situation of the 220,000 people who were displaced in the nineties must also be resolved.

The Israeli offensive against Gaza showed the increasing vulnerability of the population and the lack of resources to assist thousands of victims

external dependence of the population and the serious worsening of the humanitarian crisis were notable. The blockade led to the disruption of health and sanitation services, increasing the risk of the epidemics. In December, the Israeli offensive against Gaza showed the increasing vulnerability of the population and the lack of resources to assist thousands of victims. Israel obstructed the provision of aid to the civilian population, impeding or delaying access by humanitarian organisations, including the Red Cross, which claimed that the Israeli Army was violating the Geneva Convention in refusing to evacuate and assist the victims of its military operations.¹¹ Israel's decision to impede the supply of goods to the area was described by the United Nations as a collective punishment, although this did not persuade the Israeli Executive to change its position. This situation was defined by various NGOs (including Oxfam) as the worst experienced in the area since 1967. The Israeli government also continued its policy of demolitions and forced evictions in Gaza and the West Bank during the year.

Meanwhile, in **Iraq**, the IOM pointed out that, despite the fact the level of forced displacement had reduced during the first half of the year, the humanitarian needs of the displaced population were pressing. Along these lines, the Parliamentary Committee for Displacement and Migration asked the Government to set aside a fixed percentage of oil income to assist the IDP, a proposal that was not approved. The chairman of the Committee pointed out that the fall in oil prices could reduce even more the funds set aside for the assistance of displaced people, as the Iraqi Government considers the situation of these people as provisional and is against making any kind of difference between them and the rest of the population. Meanwhile, the Iraq's working group on displaced persons (IOM, UNHCR and various NGOs and UN agencies) warned that the public food distribution system managed by the Government was leaving many families without assistance. A group of more than 1,000 NGOs warned the Government of the need not to encourage the return of displaced persons until the security situation allows their proper reintegration. Government figures indicated that 662 families had returned to Iraq in 2008, using the subsidised transport system.

Finally, in **Yemen** the confrontations in the north of the country combined with the food insecurity and the flooding in the south-east, increased the seriousness of the humanitarian crisis. More than 100,000 people were displaced in 2008 by the violence, while many humanitarian and human rights organisations denounced the Government for hampering the provision of aid in various regions of the north. A HRW report indicated that the Executive had denied access to the humanitarian agencies that were trying to make an

Middle East

Countries	Crisis factors
Iraq	Armed conflict, natural disasters, political and economic crisis
Palestine	Armed conflict, blockade on aid, political and economic crisis
Yemen	Armed conflict, natural disasters, volume of refugees

In the Middle East the situation faced in **Palestine** because of Israel's continuing blockade on the entry of fuel, food and humanitarian aid to Gaza led to two-thirds of the United Nations humanitarian appeal for 2009 being focused on providing food. The increasing

10. Amnesty International, *Civilians in the line of fire. The Georgia-Russia conflict*, November 2008 <<http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/asset/EURO4/005/2008/es/d9908665-ab55-11dd-a4cd-bfa0fdea9647/eur040052008eng.pdf>>.

11. Under the Geneva Convention of 1949, the warring parties are obliged to do everything possible to find, assist and evacuate the sick and wounded without delay.

assessment of the needs of the most populated areas. Between 20,000 and 25,000 people were displaced and around 650,000 were affected by heavy rainfalls in the province of Hadramaut (south-east), where humanitarian organisations highlighted the lack of coordination in the provision of assistance to the beneficiaries. The United Nations made an 11.5-million-dollar emergency appeal to deal with this situation. Meanwhile, the WFP began a food aid programme aimed at the population who were most vulnerable to the increase in prices of consumer goods, initially intended for 700,000 people.

5.3. Humanitarian action overview 2008

Various aspects related to the humanitarian crisis and humanitarian action during 2008 are analysed below, specifically the main difficulties faced by the humanitarian organisations and the role played by the donor countries.¹²

a) Main difficulties of humanitarian action

2008 was clearly marked by the increase in the prices of food and fuel, which generated serious difficulties for UN organisations and agencies in meeting the targets set at the beginning of the year. The cost of operations increase and, although donor contributions were clearly superior to those of the previous year (see graph 5.2), this could not prevent agencies like the WFP being forced to reduce food aid rations in many countries. The lack of coordination when it comes to dealing with a humanitarian emergency was also highlighted as a serious obstacle in countries like Afghanistan, Haiti, Pakistan and Yemen. There, humanitarian agents faced serious problems in gaining access to the population.

As for the blocking of access to humanitarian organisations, countries where access was hampered by violence (such as Afghanistan, Colombia, DR Congo and Somalia) should be differentiated from those where the Government actively impeded the arrival of humanitarian materials and personnel, such as Sri Lanka, Israel in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, DPR Korea, Sudan, Yemen and Myanmar. This situation raises dilemmas concerning the responsibility of States for protecting their citizens and the duty of the international community to act if they do not do so. This happened in the case of Myanmar, when the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner invoked the principle of the Responsibility to Protect to call for international military action in the country after the passage of Cyclone Nargis, when faced with the refusal of the Military Junta to allow the entry of international humanitarian workers. Kouchner later recognised that the Responsibility to Protect had been created as a response to the vulner-

able position of civilians in a situation of violence, and was therefore not applicable.

Attacks against humanitarian personnel were particularly serious in Somalia, Chad, Sudan and Afghanistan, where workers from organisations and agencies became a target and where the confusion generated because humanitarian operations were being carried out by military bodies, led to an increase in insecurity for the humanitarian workers on the ground. Meanwhile, the presence of peace-keeping operations on the ground did not manage to improve the distribution of aid in countries like Chad and the Central African Republic. The theft of humanitarian material and attacks on emergency convoys were common practices in these countries. Meanwhile, the Government's attempts to control the distribution of aid had alarming consequences in contexts like Zimbabwe, where access to basic goods was linked to membership of the presidential party, ZANU-PF, and where humanitarian activity was interrupted for several months.

b) The role of donors

Despite the economic crisis affecting donor countries during 2008, the year ended with a total of 10,500 million dollars committed to fund humanitarian action all over the world. This figure has been improved only by the funds pledged in 2005 —13,153 million dollars— a year when a tsunami affected south-east Asia. In the same way, the amount of resources managed through the United Nations system —4,700 million dollars— was a record figure for the organisation.

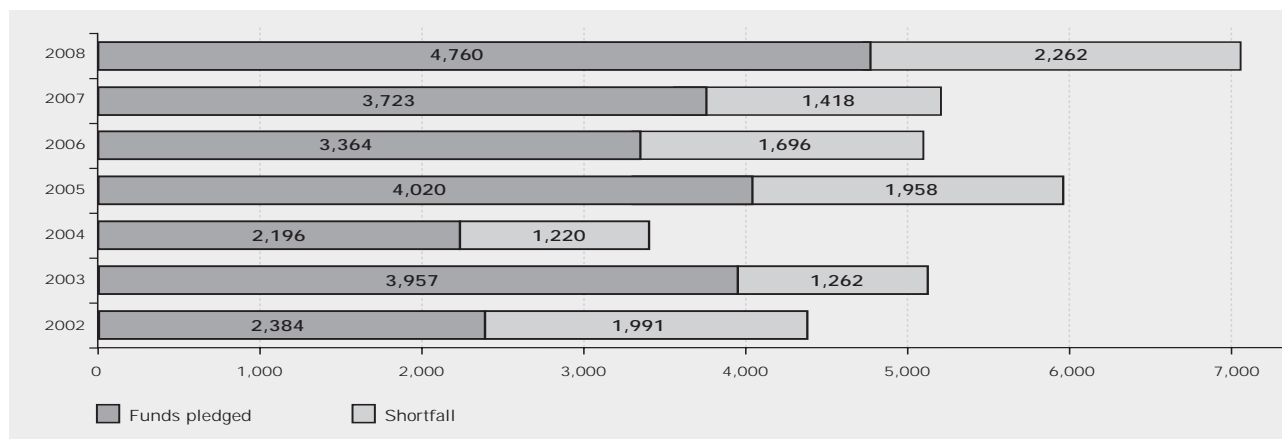
At the end of the year, the funding of consolidated (CAP) and flash appeals achieved 67% of what had been requested, the same percentage as the previous year.¹³ The CAPs that received least funds in 2008 were Côte d'Ivoire, for the second successive year —with 43%—, followed by Uganda (65%) and West Africa (66%). There was, however an overall increase in the funding of appeals compared to previous years. As for flash appeals, it should be highlighted that the crisis in Georgia had managed to collect only 36% of what had been asked for four months after it was launched, while the Myanmar cyclone, one of the biggest natural disasters during the year, got only 67% of what was requested. The overall funding for flash appeals was moderate, with an average of 58%.

As for the sectors that obtained the biggest funding during 2008, the list was once again headed by food, with 86% of requested funds covered, followed by multi-sector projects (72%) and coordination and support services (63%). It is important to point out that vital sectors, such as the security of humanitarian workers on the ground, managed to obtain only 6% of the funds demanded. It is also contradictory to record that the agriculture sector achieved only 39% of what had been

12. Humanitarian action is understood as all the activities whose aim is to save lives and alleviate suffering in humanitarian crisis situations. These activities are guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Humanitarian action also includes the protection of civilians and the provision of basic aid.

13. See definitions of CAP and *flash appeal* in notes 5 and 7.

Graph 5.2. Humanitarian funding overview (in millions of dollars)



Font: OCAH. *Humanitarian Appeal 2009*. ONU, desembre 2008

requested, when the majority of international economic bodies were committed to an increase in food sovereignty as a response to the crisis on import dependent countries.

The list of countries that have disbursed more funds compared to their GDP is headed by Saudi Arabia, followed by Norway, Monaco, Luxemburg and Switzerland. Most of the funds offered by Saudi Arabia were intended for the emergency in Sudan and were processed bilaterally, government to government. OCHA indicated that none of the ten biggest economies in the world were among the ten principal donors.

The assessment made by OCHA of humanitarian funding in 2008 pointed out that the growing

OCHA pointed out that the growing food insecurity was leading to the emergence of humanitarian needs in countries where there was no natural disaster that triggers an emergency

food insecurity was leading to the emergence of humanitarian needs in countries where there was no natural disaster that triggers an emergency. This situation, which could worsen in 2009, will require humanitarian and development organisations to learn to work together and will force donors to find a way of financing humanitarian aid in development situations.

Meanwhile, CERF assigned a total of 398 million dollars to fund emergency operations in 53 countries with more than 400 projects. DR Congo was the country that obtained more funds and the WFP was the body with more assignments. By regions, the Horn of Africa and East Africa were those that received most finance from this fund.

Box 5.5. HRI: An index to measure aid effectiveness

In 2008, the international organisation DARA (Development Assistance Research Associated) published the second edition of the Humanitarian Response Index (HRI).¹⁴ This instrument came up from the need to assess the performance of the main donor countries in relation to the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, approved in 2003 by all the countries members of the OECD. The methodology of the index is based on obtaining quantitative and qualitative data based on the 23 principles and good practices included in this document. The purpose of the exercise is to promote reflection among donor countries for the creation and implementation of strategies making humanitarian intervention increasingly effective, efficient, quick and appropriate, achieving the objective of saving lives and preserving the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality.

The index is based on five pillars, containing a total of 58 indicators:

1. Response to humanitarian needs
2. Support for local capacity and long-term recovery
3. Work with humanitarian partners
4. Promotion and respect for international principles and improvements in implementation
5. Promotion of learning and accountability

14. DARA. *Humanitarian Response Index 2008*. Dara, November 2008. <<http://www.hri.daraint.org/>>.

Based on these pillars, an index is drawn up ranging between 1 and 10, with the latter figure indicating the best humanitarian response. In the first positions of the *ranking* drawn up for 2008 are Sweden (7.90), Norway (7.60) and Denmark (7.39); while the table concludes with Austria (5.32), Portugal (5.10) and Greece (4.80) in last place. Spain (6.07) occupies position number 16 in a list of 22 countries, to which is added an assessment of the European Commission's action as a body, specifically the ECHO agency.

The report accompanying the HRI concludes that all countries can and must do much more to improve their donation practices in each of the five pillars. It is indicated that donors do not always provide aid impartially, neutrally and independently and that national agendas are more important than real world needs when it comes to donor-ship priorities. It also highlights the importance of improving the assessments on humanitarian needs in each case and increasing donor accountability based on the implementation and achievement of objectives for the financed projects.