

CONFERENCE REPORT

SOUTH-SOUTH HUMANITARIANISM

26-27 NOVEMBER 2014

**The Center for Global Governance and Policy at
The Jindal School of International Affairs**

This conference report is a thematic discussion of the main issues covered during an international conference on 'South-South Humanitarianism' convened by Dr. Urvashi Aneja at the Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University, India. The conference received intellectual and financial support from the International Committee of the Red Cross (India), Save the Children (UK) and the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (India).



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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Tunisia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo were among the top ten donors to post-earthquake Haiti; the two largest individual contributors to the Haiti Emergency Relief Fund were Brazil and Saudi Arabia. Azerbaijan opened its international development agency, AIDA, in September 2001. India made the largest contribution to the Pakistan Emergency Relief Fund following the earthquake in 2010. Iran and Pakistan are among the top two refugee hosting countries in the world. In 2011, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation replaced the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as the lead coordinating agency in Somalia. The bulk of humanitarian assistance within Syria is being programmed by informal civil society and volunteer networks. After Hurricane Katrina, Sri Lanka offered aid to the United States. ASEAN played a key role in facilitating international relief to Myanmar following Cyclone Nargis. Islamic NGOs were at the front line of the relief effort in Aceh and Mali.

The above examples are indicative of a changing landscape of international humanitarian aid. Southern states and organisations are no longer merely recipients of aid, but donors contributing to international aid and relief operations. South-South humanitarianism is not a new phenomena, but the diversity of actors and their growing contributions and influence makes it an opportune moment to examine the nature and implications of southern partnerships for humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian contributions by southern donors can help fill the gap between growing humanitarian needs and stagnating humanitarian budgets. Southern participation can also improve the representatives and legitimacy of international humanitarian action. Southern actors might also be able to use their own developmental experiences to inform humanitarian aid programming, and bring new ideas and thinking to the international humanitarian system. However, as most southern states prefer bilateral state-to state channels over the multilateral UN and NGO system, and do not participate in international humanitarian governance fora, their participation could also result in a deeper fragmentation of the system and weaken established humanitarian principles. Scholarship on southern participation in humanitarian assistance is still at a nascent stage and the humanitarian contributions of southern states and organisations are not well documented or calculated.

The Center for Global Governance & Policy at the Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University, organized a two day conference, on 26 & 27 November 2014, to bring together academics, policy-makers, and practitioners in an inter-disciplinary discussion about the nature, future, and implications of southern partnerships for humanitarian assistance. Papers and participation were sought around four central themes:

MANY HUMANITARIANISMS

Humanitarianism has a diverse global history that predates the existence of the formal humanitarian system. In order to understand southern practices of humanitarianism, we need to interrogate the philosophical, moral, historical, and cultural understandings of humanitarianism among southern actors. Examining southern understandings and practices of humanitarianism also offers an opportunity to problematize dominant understandings of humanitarian action embedded in northern history, culture, and institutional practices.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

What are the goals, principles, and mechanisms of southern humanitarian donorship? Who is providing aid where, how, with whom, and to what effect? Do southern donors adhere to traditional humanitarian principles or do their programs suggest a new paradigm for humanitarianism? How is

the distinction between political and humanitarian action managed and implemented, and to what effect? What role do non-state actors play in southern humanitarianism?

EFFECTS AND OUTCOMES

What are the effects of south - south humanitarianism for meeting humanitarian needs? How do southern donors define and measure effective humanitarian action? What impact do southern humanitarian partnerships have for the protection and welfare of civilians? What impact will the diversity of southern actors have for attempts to improve coherence and coordination within the formal multilateral system?

HUMANITARIAN GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

If humanitarianism operates as a form of governance between the global north and south, as suggested by critical scholars of humanitarianism, how might the nature of humanitarian governance transform as the lines between donors and recipients become blurred? What conception of international order and justice is likely to be promoted through south - south humanitarianism? Will southern humanitarianism create new hierarchies in the international system or could it improve on the paternalism that has characterized much of humanitarianism's history?

KEY THEMES

Presentations and conversations covered a wide range of topics, issues, and case studies. Below are some of the key themes that emerged during the conference.

INTERROGATING THE LABEL

Participants critically interrogated the meaning and applicability of the label 'south-south humanitarianism'. The south refers to a diverse set of actors, histories, cultures, and experiences, who differ in their priorities and approach. There is thus not one south, but many souths, comprised of states, civil society organisations, religious groups, military, diaspora, private philanthropists, among others. We should therefore be cautious with the use of such homogenizing labels.

Southern civil society organisations are often funded by northern agencies and northern agencies often employ staff from southern states. It is thus not clear where the north ends and the south begins; elements of the south exist in the north, and vice versa. The use of such terminology should also not establish a relationship based on difference and hierarchy between northern and southern actors as what is required is genuine partnership between all actors across geographical and political divisions.

Participants also noted that it is still unclear whether there is something qualitatively unique about southern humanitarianism, whether southern humanitarian actors bring any new thinking or paradigms that can be identified as distinctively 'southern'. If the language of southern humanitarianism is to have any positive value it must lie in trying to uncover the tangible contribution that southern actors can make towards international humanitarianism based on their experiences and learning as recipients of international humanitarian assistance.

"What seems to be south-south humanitarianism is what states are interpreting for us. We need to see what else is happening - at the local level and also within national structures. If there is anything new to be found, it's perhaps not in these large state led narratives, but in these other alternative discourses and practices. We need to recognize, engage, and legitimize these other voices."

Mirak Raheem, Independent consultant, Sri Lanka

DIFFERENT TERMINOLOGIES

A number of presentations highlighted and unpacked the different vocabulary and terminology used by southern states. A number of southern states define their overseas assistance programs in terms of ‘partnerships’, based on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference. The language of partnership is used to demonstrate a commitment to southern cooperation and solidarity and to distinguish southern programs from the ‘aid’ programs of northern ‘donors’ that are perceived to be marked by inequity and dependency. Southern states also tend to employ the language of ‘disaster relief’ rather than ‘humanitarianism.’ The term humanitarianism is perceived by southern states to be moral cover for northern states and humanitarian agencies to secure their political and organizational interests. Moreover, the term humanitarianism is applicable in both political emergencies and natural disasters. Southern states however tend to focus their aid on natural disasters alone as aid in political emergencies is seen as a challenge to the principle of non-interference. Southern states thus argue that they are engaged in disaster relief based on the principle of solidarity and development cooperation based on the principles of mutual benefit and equality, not humanitarianism. A number of southern states also define their aid as demand-driven; this is to emphasize that aid is provided in line with national priorities and distinct from western aid programs which are perceived to be supply driven.

“China has persisted in attaching no political conditions, no interference in the internal affairs of recipient countries and full respect for the rights of recipient countries in choosing their own roads and models for development. Mutual respect, equal treatment, good faith, keeping promise and win-win cooperation constitute the fundamental principles of China’s external aid.”

Ambassador Lu Shumin, Executive Director, Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs

A number of the conference participants noted however the above is the official state narrative, and that there are significant divergences in practice. For example, southern states have made exceptions to the principle of non-interference to further their political and strategic interests, as in Syria. Demand-driven aid is also based on the priorities identified by the recipient governments, rather than affected communities.

MANY LEGITIMATE HUMANITARIANISMS

Different cultures and societies might have different historical, philosophical, and cultural understandings of humanitarianism. Participants suggested that we need to have a more inclusive view of how different cultures define legitimate humanitarianism. In order to so, we need to ask how different communities define :

- a) who is considered a legitimate humanitarian actor;
- b) why do they provide aid;
- c) to whom do they provide aid
- d) when and how do they provide.

This perspective will allow us to shift focus from assessing the conformity or deviation from existing definitions and standards to exploring differing conceptions of moral responsibility and humanitarian obligation.¹

“The idea of Ubuntu in African cultures could also serve as the basis for a theory of southern humanitarianism. Ubuntu rests on five key features: i) interest in the sustenance of the community; ii) capacity for compassion; iii) sharing of resources; iv) reciprocity; and v) a duty not based on relative wealth.”

Oheneba Boateng, PhD Research Fellow, Berlin Graduate School of Transnational Studies

¹ Jacinta O’Hagan and Miwa Hirono, “ Fragmentation of the International Humanitarian Order? Understanding “Cultures of Humanitarianism in East Asia”, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 28(4):2014

In East Asia for example, the state is seen as holding the primary responsibility for humanitarian assistance and there is a sense of benevolence or sacredness associated with the state. Civil society has also historically been symbiotic with the state rather than an independent social force. In another example, contemporary discourses on humanitarianism are dominated by an emphasis on rights-based approaches, based on the argument that a rights based humanitarianism ensures that people are treated with dignity. In many cultures however, charity is in fact a legitimate and necessary activity - the idea that humanitarianism should be a form of charity is thus considered legitimate. Looking at how different societies and cultures understand their ethical obligations to others thus can provide a challenge to the assumed wisdom and universality of rights based approaches. Moreover, in Chinese and Japanese societies, a communitarian ethic of obligation has long been dominant - one that sees one's ethical obligations as expanding in concentric circles. This view is in contrast to the idea of traditional humanitarian principle of universality and impartiality. The concentration of humanitarian aid from Gulf donors and Turkey to Muslim majority nations similarly highlights how humanitarianism might be based on the principle of Islamic solidarity rather than universalism.

POLITICAL HUMANITARIANISM

A number of participants noted that the growth of international humanitarianism was not only a reflection of growing compassion, but also political and strategic interests of northern states. If it is the political motivation underlying southern donorship that is of concern, this concern is not a new one and in fact has been a characteristic of humanitarianism's history. Some participants further argued that politically motivated, or self-interested, action can have humanitarian benefits; motivations are thus less important than outcome in determining whether a particular program is meeting humanitarian needs. The history of humanitarianism demonstrated that even aid that has been politically motivated has nonetheless saved the lives of millions.

"The survival of humanitarianism cannot depend on all actors behaving selflessly with no interests what so ever. Power and self interest are very important motivating factors. Some time self-interest can be good for others. For example, India's invasion of East Pakistan in 1971 - India saw it as a national security threat with 10 million refugees, but its actions also stopped the genocide"

Dr. Anne Hammerstad, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Kent

Sessions on the role of civil society and diaspora also brought out the point that civil society cannot be thought of as a neutral actor - their aspirations for social change are fundamentally political in nature. Yet, civil society actors play a critical role in helping meet humanitarian needs. The humanitarian and political do not operate as binaries, and humanitarian cannot be defined simply as that which is not political. The political itself needs to be defined and cannot be used to define a singular idea or action - there are many kinds of political motivations and actions and some might be better for certain ends than others.

MOTIVATIONS: INTERESTS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

Participants noted that the motivations for the involvement of southern states in international humanitarianism is shaped by their political, economic, and strategic interests. It is also motivated by a concern with soft power, regional and global leadership, and understandings of responsible

citizenship in the global system. Yet, the nature, motives, and practices of humanitarianism cannot be reduced to these set of interests.

We need to also take seriously the identity, history, and culture of southern states and societies. The principle of non-interference or the preference for bilateral mechanisms for humanitarianism assistance for example are not only a reflection of state interests but also a normative position based on the colonial history of a number of southern states. A shared sense of empathy and solidarity at least partly explains why the discourse of south-south humanitarianism revolves around the concepts of solidarity and the sharing of knowledge and resources. Islamic beliefs also dictate aid from the Gulf states who seek to promote Islamic solidarity. The concentration of aid to regional neighbors is not only a reflection of strategic regional interests but historical definitions of the region and moral perspectives on the scope of humanitarian obligation.

“Humanitarianism lies at the heart of Indian spiritual and cultural and religious values. The Gita teaches that there should be no motive in charity - there should be solidarity with suffering and giving without expectation of return.”

Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar,
Ministry of Home Affairs, India

An important factor to keep in mind is the dual identity of a number of the southern state donors, as both developing states and as donors. The domestic political and social conditions are likely to shape the manner in which donors engage on the international stage. It might place certain constraints on the nature of their involvement and financial contributions, as well as push for greater engagement in foreign disasters and political emergencies at the behest of civil society organisations, diaspora groups, and private commercial interests.

States	Identities	Approach to International humanitarian regime	Power and Pressure from international society	Donor interests	Norms		
					social democracy & welfare	cosmopolitanism	south-south or religious solidarity
China	Superpower	Mini-Max	-	Diplomatic & Pragmatic	-	-	Yes
Gulf States	Islamic	Co-operative	-	-	-	-	Yes
Taiwan & South Korea	Middle Power	Converging	Yes	Diplomatic	Yes	Yes	-

Table provided by Dr. Hisashiro Kondoh, Associate Professor, Yokohama National University²

SOUTHERN HUMANITARIANISM: ADDED VALUE

Almost all participants at the conference agreed that there is a great deal of ambiguity around how southern humanitarianism is distinctive, or different from northern humanitarianism, if at all. Looking forward, to think about how southern humanitarianism can add value, it was suggested that we should turn to the communities who are the recipients of aid, but who have the least say in humanitarian policy and programming. Looking at what

If seen from the perspective of the recipient community, perhaps we should place more emphasis on the values of plurality and uniqueness, rather than neutrality and universality.

Mihir Bhatt, Director and Founder,
All India Disaster Mitigation
Institute

² Hisashiro Kondoh, “ Why Do Emerging donors advocate humanitarianism and how much”, Paper for conference on South-South Humanitarianism, November 2014

recipient communities appreciate in Southern humanitarianism practices can therefore help in thinking about and concretizing the positive added value of humanitarianism.

Based on the Tsunami Evaluation and other evaluations of humanitarian crises over the past ten years, the following were identified as the aspects that recipient communities appreciate about southern humanitarianism: i) empathy or a willingness and ability to understand and share suffering; ii) the humility with which programs were carried out; iii) even and open communication that allows contradictions to co-exist that allows complexity to exist; iv) respect for the diversity within communities; and v) an acceptance of deviation as being normal and part of the process and reality. Participants also considered whether communities appreciate a neutral and standardized response or whether they prefer a plurality of approaches and methods; if it is the latter, then we need to think less about coherence and coordination around a common set of aims and methods and more about how diversity and plurality can facilitate an effective humanitarian response.

INDUCTIVE DEMAND DRIVEN AID

Participants noted that the appetite for global normative frameworks was shrinking. Even the principle of universality which has been at the center of the traditional humanitarian framework is being contested by new thinking and practices. Aid from the Gulf States and Turkey which is specifically intended for either Muslim populations challenges the principles of universality. Others questioned the value of the principle of universality, on a more conceptual level, suggested that perhaps we need to move towards a framework that is based on uniqueness and specificity rather than universality. This suggestion resonates with an emphasis among all participants on context specific programs and standards.

Rather than focus on strengthening and institutionalizing a singular global normative framework, perhaps what we need is an inductive approach - one that is demand-driven, bottom-up, contextualized, evidence based and action oriented. While this would mean a diversity of humanitarian responses and programs, diversity is the best way of addressing a complex system of needs. Yet, this does not mean that we abdicate collective responsibility - we need to start by acknowledging collective responsibility while respecting the mandates and expertise of individual actors. There remained however some debate among participants about the value and applicability of a global normative framework based on the traditional humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law as some called for strengthening existing principles and coordination frameworks.

“Where are the meeting points between the state level discourse and civil society and people on the ground?”

Ray Kancharla, National Humanitarian and DRR Manager, Save the Children, India

ROLE OF THE STATE AND CITIZENS

The fast moving system of today tries to provide a quick response, often bypassing the existing structures in the interest of executing state delivery. However, as humanitarian actors can only nurse the wound and not address the underlying cause of the conflict, national actors - the state and civil society - have to assume responsibility. External assistance should be complementary and channeled through government channels at the earliest. This will help strengthen ownership, ensure resources are aligned to country priorities and to help build national systems. The risk of creating long-term dependency must also be minimized by ensuring that external assistance is time bound, based on clear outcomes, and a well defined exit strategy.

Participants noted that this is especially important in middle income countries such as India in which the recovery of the existing system is a top priority. This is only possible through the building and managing of effective partnerships among already existing and capable humanitarian agencies and civil society organization. One way to build such partnerships is bottom-up, starting at the district level; the humanitarian response to the Uttarakhand flood in India is an example of effective partnerships that were built at the district level around a long-term recovery plan.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Participants shared a common concern that there is very little information available about the short and long term impacts of humanitarian programs, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. The final analysis of southern humanitarian will rest in an analysis of such evidence, along with a study of the potential and actual comparative advantage of northern and southern donors.

Participants also noted that most of the discussion on southern humanitarianism focus on states, and there is little information about the role of civil society, voluntary organisations, philanthropic initiatives, religious organisations and the military. Even where this information and knowledge does exist, it is typically funded or carried out by a northern agency. There are only few resource centers for accountability, learning and partnerships in the south. There is also an acute lack of information sharing and knowledge management

STANDARDS AND COORDINATION

Standards such as the SPHERE standards need to be made contextually applicable and culturally relevant. Participants agreed that the question of quality was therefore also relative to cultural appropriateness; quality measures must reflect appropriateness. Participants also commented on the huge cost of coordinating a cluster, and yet little observable benefit from such coordination exercises. This raised the question of whether we are going about coordination in the wrong way and whether we need to be thinking about it differently, and whether coordination sacrifices diversity and plurality.

Many also highlighted the difficulty southern civil society organisations, NGOs, and individual humanitarian works have in accessing international humanitarian governance fora due the financial and time commitments many of these fora require. Cluster meetings were cited as an apt example. Mobility of staff from southern states to international governance fora and international humanitarian agencies is also limited by cost, language, and the qualification requirements for employment.

“ The experience of a genocide in Rwanda and the failure of the international community taught Rwanda a very important lesson. Take ownership. This was your mess. Define a new path for your own country. Rebuild the country on your own terms and based on your vision and priorities. This is the basis upon which a new Rwanda is built...The government of Rwanda demanded accountability from humanitarian agencies and urged NGOs to align their intervention to national priorities.”

Ernest Rwamuyco, High Commissioner of Rwanda to India

HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHOP

- Fernando Espada, SCF, to be completed 13.02.15

NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL SOUTHERN DONORS

BRAZIL³

- Most aid thorough bilateral channels to countries in the Latin American region. Gradual shift towards countries in North and Sub-Saharan countries, and through multi-lateral channels.
- Norm shift in Brazil's outlook, from 'non-interference' to 'non-indifference'. This shift helps justify Brazil's growing involvement in Chapter VII peacekeeping operations.
- Brazil has perhaps been more active than other southern states in attempting to shape international fora for humanitarian governance. In 2011, at the UN General Assembly, Brazil put forth the concept of 'Responsibility while Protecting' to supplement the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine.
- Brazil seeks to challenge western norms without confronting the western paradigm as a whole. It could perhaps play a bridging role between different conceptions of the international community's sense of duty.
- Domestic political conditions are likely to influence Brazil's attempts to shape its foreign image and actions.

CHINA⁴

- China's foreign aid programs are based on The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence and the Eight Principles for China's Aid to Third World Countries
- Based on win-win principle to reinforce bilateral ties for trade and investment. Non-interference and mutual benefit are also key principles.
- Gradual but growing warming to multilateral fora and channels for humanitarian assistance. Tsunami was a key turning point.
- China has been an active participants in multilateral fora for combating Ebola. It is one of the first and largest contributors, including a multi-trust UN fund for Ebola.
- China also also been engaged with regional frameworks for disaster management such as the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, as well as the World Food Program and UN - OCHA.
- Provides primarily emergency relief for natural disasters, but has also provided aid to Syria and Libya.
- Chinese aid has evolved from a form of revolutionary humanitarianism, between 1950 and 1978 when aid was provided to socialist countries around the world to fight imperialism, to a practical response to natural disasters where possible from 1979 to 2003, to a growingly formalized and institutionalized system, based on mix of strategic interests and normative values, and willing to engage on specific issues or crises with the international humanitarian system.
- Chinese aid is shaped by its desire to portray itself as a leader among developing countries and a responsible member of the international community. The logic of south-south solidarity is also hoped to mitigate the image of Chinese hegemony.

³ Based on presentation by Maria Jumbert, Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute, Norway

⁴ Based on presentations by Ambassador Lu Shumin, Executive Director, Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs & Tang Qi Fang, Associate Research Fellow, China Institute for International Studies, China

- China is a disaster prone country and engagement with the international system provides an opportunity for learning.

INDIA⁵

- Leadership of post-independence India believed that the development of all countries was a responsibility of the international community. India has a historical commitment to the idea of internationalism and the idea that the economic development of all states is necessary for global justice.
- Indian aid based on principles of solidarity, mutual partnership, and consent.
- India declined offers of international aid post-Tsunami. The speed and alacrity with which the Indian military was able to respond to tsunami affected areas in neighboring countries was noteworthy. Tsunami relief efforts were managed by the Indian military.
- Provides most aid through bilateral channels, though has at times made an exception - for example, provided aid to Pakistan through multilateral organisations based on a request by the Pakistani government.
- Very little evidence of impact of civil strife in India and the arising humanitarian needs.
- India is critical of the dominance of western industrialized countries and western staff in exclusive donor circles and the inefficient use of funds by western agencies and international consultants.
- One of India's largest programs is an IDP housing project in Sri Lanka. This is motivated by a mix of humanitarianism, concerns about the Tamil population in India; historical ties; and a bid for regional and global power.
- In Sri Lanka, India worked through UN agencies, such as UN Habitat, and national NGOs. Indian aid also relied on existing methods in the multilateral system for beneficiary selection and program design.

TURKEY⁶

- The top recipients of Turkish aid, programmed by the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) and Turkish NGOs, are primarily Muslim majority states. Most aid is distributed through bilateral channels. Aid programmed by NGOs is concentrated in religiously affiliated organisations.
- Turkish aid is motivated by its own history of natural disasters, a quest for regional and global leadership, and to promote a moderate form of Islam.
- Syria is the largest recipient of Turkish assistance. Turkey maintains an 'open door' policy and Syrians are seen as 'guests' - Syrians are permitted to stay in Turkey for as long as required though they will not be granted citizenship. Turkey has managed a credible refugee housing program based on UNHCR guidelines. The bulk of Syrian refugees however are being hosted through informal networks and family connections.
- Turkey is one of Somalia's key donors. Aid from Turkey is better accepted in Somalia, allowing Turkey to continue its aid programs even after the withdrawal of all Western NGOs.

⁵ Based on presentations by Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar, Secretary, National Foundation for Communal Harmony, Ministry of Home Affairs, India; Mirak Raheem, Independent Consultant; and Dr. Samrat Sinha, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs.

⁶ Based on a presentation by Reem Kabani, Senior Research Associate, Jindal School of International Affairs.

CONCLUSION

This conference was one of the first few attempts to bring together individuals and organisations working in the humanitarian sector in the South and an important step in setting a future research and activity agenda for exploring the nature, implications and future of southern partnerships for humanitarian assistance. Participants shared concerns about the label 'south-south humanitarianism' and there was broad agreement that much more research was needed to uncover the diversity and range of southern actors and approaches. We also need to think more carefully about the new thinking and practices that southern actors can bring to international humanitarian relief programs. A **future research agenda** for southern humanitarianism might therefore be based on:

- i) mapping and understanding the diversity of southern actors;
- ii) probing their histories, cultures, and experiences to explore the potential for new thinking and practices that might productively disrupt the existing system
- iii) examining the impact and consequences of southern partnerships for humanitarian assistance from the perspective of the recipient communities;
- iv) comparing the northern and southern approaches to identify their respective comparative advantage

We also need to seek new methods of research and representation to bring out the less tangible elements of what is appreciated by communities in a humanitarian response. These different methodologies, that go beyond quantitative assessment of humanitarian needs and supply, might help shift attention from the *what* of humanitarianism to the *how*, shedding light on how empathy, humility, open communication, and respect can be brought into humanitarian practice. A future research agenda on southern humanitarianism thus might also try to bring together community stories and experiences through film, photography, and story-telling, based in ethnographic and anthropological research methods.

There is a wealth of knowledge and experience in southern states, among communities, institutions, organisations, and leaders. But, these ideas and experiences need to be collected, reflected upon, learnt from, and built on, so that southern actors can contribute towards shaping future thinking and practices of humanitarianism. Most of the formalized learning and training that is currently taking place in a number of southern organisations is through internationally led training modules in humanitarian standards and evaluation. What we need instead is documentation and learning centers in the south which serve as a repository of knowledge about best and worst practices, community experiences and understandings, and which serve as a meeting point for the wide range of actors engaged in humanitarianism in the south. A sense of ownership and community are important characteristics for such research efforts and documentation centers. It is in such efforts that the term southern humanitarianism can stand for something tangible, providing constructive disruption of the existing system. Such documentation centers or repositories may provide a basis for building partnerships and encouraging inductive, demand-driven, bottom-up aid that is evidence based and context specific aid. These centers could also serve as forums for learning and knowledge and information sharing among southern actors. Support for such centers from the traditional gatekeepers of the international humanitarian system might, in the long run, help build trust, legitimacy, communication, and pre-crisis preparedness and partnership.

The policies and practices of southern states are driven by their political, economic, and strategic interests. Yet, their policies and practices must also be situated within a **framework of normative**

contestation shaped by the anti-colonial struggles of southern states and their experiences as recipients of international assistance. Reasons for the emphasis on the principle of non-interference and the state as the preferred recipient of aid for southern donors thus must not only be about the political and security interests of states but also include an acknowledgement of western imperialism and the perception that international organisations are seen to be wasteful and inadequately informed about the national priorities of the state. The normative contestation about the role and the responsibility of international actors versus domestic actors in addressing immediate and longer term suffering must thus be acknowledged and not be framed only in terms of interest-driven humanitarianism. Normative contestation also emerges from the different cultural sources of moral obligation and humanitarian duty. Charity, to give an example from the previous section, is seen as a necessary part of the social fabric in many communities, and might be seen as a legitimate alternative to a rights-based humanitarian duty.

Moreover, even while political interests shape humanitarian programs, this in itself cannot be dismissed as a violation of humanitarianism. All humanitarianism is an act of politics, and state-driven humanitarianism is just one kind of politics; non-governmental organisations engaged in rights and development programming practice another kind of politics. Moreover, the history of humanitarianism shows that humanitarianism has long been inter-twined with expressions of soft power, attempts to win acceptance, legitimacy, good will, and favor, for political interests and expediency. This is a fact of humanitarianism and cannot be wished away by any amount of myth making about the separation of the political and the humanitarianism. In fact, it seems that as states become economically and politically stronger, there is a greater imperative for them to contribute towards international humanitarianism, to be concerned about their image, and to gather good will. Thus we need not only see soft power in cynical terms - rather, we can see that humanitarianism adds some extent of legitimacy to a state's international profile.

Perhaps we need to find ways in which political interests and humanitarian interests can be aligned, to incentivize the prioritization of humanitarian needs. Past efforts to do this can be found in the concept of human security, which sought to bridge human rights with international peace and security, so as to securitize the human rights agenda in a manner that made its safeguarding a priority for states. Many scholars have already noted the limits and shortcomings of the human security agenda. There is ample space, opportunity, and a pressing need, **to think about new ways in which the humanitarian agenda can be prioritized as a form of political engagement**, yet one which does not make humanitarianism subservient to political interests. This requires new imaginations and courage, and new structural innovations and partnerships.

Of equal significance are the voices and themes that did not feature prominently at the conference. There was limited discussion of the traditional humanitarian principles of universality, impartiality, neutrality and independence, and the regulatory framework of international humanitarian law. In fact, one of the suggestions emerging from the conference was that humanitarian action cannot be defined exclusively in terms of these traditional principles. Islamic NGOs practice their own form of humanitarianism even while not necessarily subscribing to the principle of universality; the idea that we have concentric circles of obligation equally challenges the principles of universality and impartiality. Civil society organisations cannot also be called neutral, yet they play a critical role in meeting humanitarian needs. There are thus many different ways of thinking and doing humanitarianism that go beyond, and even contradict, these traditional

principles. Looking at the different kinds of legitimate humanitarianism across cultures and communities also suggests that humanitarianism is not the exclusive purview of a particular kind of actor or set of actors - the identity of an actor, in another words, is not a pre-condition for a specific assistance programs to be labelled humanitarian. Assistance provided by the military, by religious organisations, by private individuals, and by self-interested states can also be termed humanitarian assistance; outcomes are thus perhaps more important than the motivations and identity of an actor.

It was many of these other forms of humanitarianism that were missing from the composition of the conference participants and presentations. Future such meetings would need to have a much more systematic and structured effort to bring in the perspectives of civil society organizations, military personnel, religious organisations, and most importantly, the recipient communities themselves. The dominant narratives around southern humanitarianism are those emerging from the foreign ministries of southern states; much more effort and resources need to be put towards broadening these discourses to include the voices of southern communities and civil society organisations. These efforts will help unpack and define the contributions that southern actors can make towards international humanitarianism.

The pressing question then is how we can accommodate and encourage a diversity of approaches and actors, while still placing the needs and aspirations of recipient communities at the centre of the humanitarian response. One suggestion might be that rather than attempting to build consensus and compliance around a global normative framework for humanitarianism, such as one based on the principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence, or on rights-based entitlements, we should focus on establishing and improving mechanisms and frameworks for accountability, transparency, and respect towards communities that are the recipients of aid. The principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence have either been taken to define the identity of the aid provider or the guidelines for the provision of aid. Perhaps what is needed instead is a greater focus on **frameworks for defining and governing the relationship between aid providers and aid recipients**, based on, for example, the principles of empathy, humility, open communication, uniqueness, interdependence, and respect. Uniqueness and interdependence might even replace universality and independence, based on respect for difference and deviation.⁷

Interestingly, a lot of the discussion points raised at the conference resonate with some of the newer thinking within the formal humanitarian system - that national actors should be in the lead of the humanitarian response, that the international community should play a secondary role, only filling gaps identified by national authorities, and that much more effort needs to be invested in improving pre-disaster partnerships and situational analyses. There is also some acceptance of the idea that there is more than one kind of humanitarian action. Key southern donors such as China, Brazil, Turkey and India are keen to be seen as responsible members of the international system and have begun to engage with multilateral organisations on specific cases and issues. The multilateral system is thus far from irrelevant or past its purpose as southern states see a value in participation. The multilateral system is equally keen to engage with southern donors as the humanitarian needs are expected to far outstrip humanitarian needs in the years to come and because wider participation in these institutions is necessary for their legitimacy and effectiveness. **Avenues and opportunities for collaboration and partnership thus do exist**, but these cannot be thought of as technical matters that can be resolved through greater coordination or the socialization of southern

⁷ Mihir Bhatt, Director and Founder, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, India

donors into existing institutional structures. Rather normative contestation and political interests need to be taken seriously, as well as concerns and critique raised by southern participants about the exclusivity of international humanitarian governance fora and mechanisms.

PROGRAM

DAY ONE

WEDNESDAY, 26 Nov 2014 / T-2 Auditorium

10:00 - 10:15

REGISTRATION STARTS AT 9AM

Welcome Remarks

Dr. C Raj Kumar, Vice Chancellor, OP Jindal Global University and Dean
Jindal Global Law School

Urvashi Aneja, Associate Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs

10:15 - 10:45

Chief Guest's Address

Ambassador Lu Shumin, Executive Director
Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs

10:45 - 11:15

Distinguished Address

Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar, Honorable Secretary, National Foundation for
Communal Harmony, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India

11:15 - 11:45

Inaugral Address

Excellency Ernest Rwamuyco, High Commissioner of Rwanda to India

12:00 - 13:30

SESSION I

International Humanitarianism & the Global South

Dominik Bartsch, Chief of Mission, UNHCR India

Mihir Bhatt, Director & Founder, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute

Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System for
Developing Countries (TBC)

Pascal Daudin, Head of Policy Unit, International Committee of the Red Cross

Rajesh Tandon, President, Participatory Research in Asia

CHAIR: Sreeram Chaulia, Dean, Jindal School of International Affairs

14:30 - 16:00

SESSION II

Many Humanitarianisms

Jacinta O'Hagan, Fellow, Department of International Relations, Australian National
University

Oheneba Boateng, PhD Research Fellow, Berlin Graduate School of Transnational Studies

Anne Hammerstad, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Kent

Chair: Fernando Espada, Humanitarian Affairs Adviser, Save the Children UK

16:30 - 18:00

SESSION III

Diversity in Donorship

Mirak Raheem, Independent researcher, Sri Lanka

Akhona Nkenkana, Graduate student, Jindal School of International Affairs

Hisahiro Kondo, Associate Professor, Yokohama National University, Japan

Discussant : Anne Hammerstad, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Kent, UK

Chair: Samrat Sinha, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs

DAY TWO

THURSDAY, 27 NOV 2014 / T-2 Auditorium

10:00 - 11:00

Distinguished Address

Ambassador Alope Sen, Former Indian Ambassador to Myanmar, Cambodia and Turkey

11:15 - 12:45

SESSION I

Southern states as humanitarian actors

Maria Jumbert, Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway

Reem Kabbani, Senior Research Associate, Jindal School of International Affairs

Tang Qifang, Associate Research Fellow, China Institute for International Studies, Beijing

Discussant: Jacinta O'Hagan, Fellow, Department of International Relations, Australian National University,

Chair: Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India

14:00 - 15:30

PARALLEL SESSION

SESSION II

International Law and Humanitarianism

Satish Nambiar, Distinguished Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, Delhi

V. Sessaiah Shastri, Professor and Additional Dean, Faculty of Law, National Law University, Jodhpur

Rashmi Raman, Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School

Discussant: Rohini Sen, Jindal Global Law School

Chair: Ambassador Gudmundar Eiriksson, Professor and Executive Director, Center for International Legal Studies, Jindal Global Law School (TBC)

14:00 - 15:30

PARALLEL SESSION

Conference Room T2
3rd Floor

SESSION III

Regional Organizations, Civil Society & Diasporas

Champa Patel, Head of Campaigns and Individuals at Risk, Amnesty International UK Section

Samrat Sinha, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs

Rohit Patil, Graduate Student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Discussant: Mirak Raheem, Independent Researcher, Sri Lanka

Chair: Martin Slood, General Director, MSF India

16:00 - 18:00

SESSION IV: WORKSHOP

Humanitarian Effectiveness: exploring Southern understandings

Save the Children's Humanitarian Affairs Team and All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) will co-host a workshop exploring different Southern understandings of humanitarian effectiveness. Participants will consider how different Southern approaches to assessing effectiveness have been constructed, with particular focus on the political drivers that have determined effectiveness agendas. They will reflect upon how different Southern understandings have shaped the practices of Southern humanitarian actors, but also created a framework for the activities of Northern actors in the South. And, drawing on different understandings, they will discuss how Southern humanitarian action might be more effective.

Facilitators: Fernando Espada, Humanitarian Affairs Adviser, Save the Children UK
Mihir Bhatt, Founder and Director of AIDMI