

# FRANCE'S HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

**2018-2022**



*Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité*  
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

MINISTÈRE  
DE L'EUROPE ET DES  
AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

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## Foreword

**By Jean-Yves Le Drian**

**Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs**

Humanitarian action is a pillar of our foreign policy. France has helped define what it means, participated in the debates that have shaped it, and supported its development and expansion, both on the ground through its pioneering NGOs and in international forums. From negotiating the first Geneva Conventions in 1864 to French doctors' work in Biafra, reception of Vietnamese boat people and the founding of emblematic NGOs such as Doctors without Borders, Handicap International (each honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 and 1999, respectively), Action Against Hunger and Doctors of the World, France is deeply involved in an arm of international relations that over the decades has become a field in its own right.

Humanitarian action aims to save lives and ensure the dignity of populations in countries affected by natural and man-made disasters by meeting their basic needs: access to water and sanitation, food, medical care, shelter, etc. Through a duty of solidarity, an approach of subsidiarity and complementarity, and its contribution to international stability, humanitarian action is inseparable from our vision and the values of our engagement in the world. In France, we are lucky to have developed exceptional humanitarian expertise through the commitment of French organizations and the men and women who work for them. I would like to honour their unwavering commitment to the cause. Inspired by the generations before them who embarked on this demanding path, their skills are unanimously appreciated, even as theatres of emergency humanitarian action have multiplied.

Humanitarian action is directly affected by the deteriorating international environment. The proliferation of crises and conflicts, their increasing complexity and prolonged nature, now ever closer to Europe, are the most visible and worrying symptoms of a shifting international context. They lead to a substantial increase in the needs of populations who are victims of these upheavals. Aid workers, who are on the front lines of these crises, know better than anyone.

The crises of our times are multidimensional; they combine economic and environmental factors, political challenges and security threats. As a result, civilian populations may never have been so vulnerable. The figures speak for themselves: 128 million people around the world need immediate humanitarian assistance; 65.5 million people have been uprooted, driven from their homes in search of a better future. Meanwhile, the epidemics that emerge at the heart of crisis situations make large-scale medical response actions critical. We also live in a time where international humanitarian law is being called into question. In numerous crisis theatres, violence against civilian populations occurs daily, and in certain cases, is systematic. Providing international assistance to affected populations is more difficult and humanitarian and medical personnel have become targets themselves.

Humanitarian action has a key role to play in our overall approach to crisis

management. However, for years now, the state resources devoted to humanitarian action have not been able to meet soaring needs nor France's ambitions for crisis intervention. We have decided to give ourselves the means to address this new reality.

As part of the increase to our official development assistance as determined by the French President, additional efforts will be made for humanitarian aid. In February, the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development set out our objectives: France's annual contribution to humanitarian action and post-crisis stabilization will reach €500 million by 2022. By tripling our means, this increase – unprecedented in recent years – will benefit all instruments used for French humanitarian action.

Along with this upscaling of our capacity for action, we must develop a new framework within which to work. This is the priority of this national humanitarian strategy, which seeks to make our assistance more effective. It is based on three main areas of focus: increasing resources and improving how they are used; integrating humanitarian action into sustained crisis management; and enhancing compliance with international humanitarian law through international forums, our bilateral relations and on the ground.

This new strategy also addresses the phase of profound reforms the world humanitarian system has begun to make it more efficient, more transparent, closer to populations in need, more focused on supporting local actors, and an integrated component of sustained crisis management rather than solely an emergency response. This desire for improvement, undertaken by the World Humanitarian Summit, is implemented through the Grand Bargain, which France endorsed last summer.

With its new humanitarian strategy, France is at the forefront of this transformation. This document marks a new stage in our commitment by setting a clear course of action with the means necessary to increase and improve our humanitarian aid. The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is proud to partner with French NGOs to take on this necessarily ambitious challenge. France is and will continue to be at their sides to protect life and human dignity and support international law.

# **I. The context: Greater needs that require greater international efforts**

## **1. Ever more crises**

While interstate armed conflicts have become less frequent since the end of the Cold War, new types of armed clashes have emerged. As societies become more fragmented, causing growing political and socioeconomic tensions, local and infra-state conflicts have risen sharply. A total of 278 armed conflicts were identified in 2006; there were 402 in 2016. Across the world, most humanitarian needs are a result of conflicts: 23 of the 25 countries covered by the UN-coordinated humanitarian response plans for 2018 are in conflict. Armed conflicts are also the leading cause of forced displacements (internal displacement and refugees), which have soared from 39.5 million in 2006 to 45.1 million in 2012 and 65.6 million in 2016. This is nearly the equivalent of the entire population of France.

The frequency and intensity of natural disasters are unprecedented in modern history, mainly due to climate change. Vulnerability to pandemics is rising because of increasingly mobile populations, exploding demographic growth, urbanization and climate change. Until the early 1990s, fewer than 300 disasters per year were observed in the world. Since the early 2000s, this figure has climbed to more than 500 every year. In all, 124 million people were affected by natural disasters in 2012; in 2016, there were 204 million victims.

## **2. A surge in the number of prolonged crises**

Crises have also become more prolonged. UN inter-agency calls for humanitarian funding in a given country or zone now have an average duration of eight years; 84% of humanitarian aid is allocated to crises of more than three years, and 69% to crises lasting more than ten years. "Humanitarian traps" are forming, where emergency response stakeholders are present for years and short-term fixes become long-term solutions. These situations risk becoming "forgotten crises", abandoned by international funding efforts despite unchanged needs.

## **3. Growing violations of international humanitarian law**

Violations of the basic rules of international humanitarian law (IHL) are becoming increasingly common. Civilian populations and property are attacked, with markets and schools targeted directly. Humanitarian stakeholders are also targets and attacks against them have risen significantly, tripling in the past 20 years. Attacks against the wounded and medical personnel, blocked access to medical care and the destruction of medical facilities have also reached extremely worrying levels. The indiscriminate use of explosives in populated areas has also had dramatic consequences for civilian populations. While such violations are not new, they appear to be used more systematically to achieve a military advantage in conflict. The systematic blocking of humanitarian access and the use of famine as a war tactic have become commonplace in many areas.

As crises spread, become prolonged and more complex, and are aggravated by

growing violations of international humanitarian law, needs have risen sharply. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the number of people requiring humanitarian aid has more than doubled in five years, from 61.7 million in 2012 to 128.6 million in 2017. Estimates for 2018 put this figure at 135.7 million.

Even if humanitarian aid has grown substantially since the Cold War ended – from \$2 billion in 1990 to \$16 billion in 2012 and \$27.3 billion in 2016 – this increase is inadequate with regard to actual needs. It has been estimated that \$40 billion a year is required to provide relief to the global populations that need it, which translates to a 40% funding shortfall. This shortfall is constantly growing: until 2010, it hovered around 30%, before rising to an average of 40% and reaching 48% in 2017.

#### **4. A movement to reform the international humanitarian system**

In light of these growing humanitarian needs, on the occasion of the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016 and convened by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the international community was asked to profoundly rethink its humanitarian action through a new Agenda for Humanity. The agenda has five major areas for action: (1) prevent and end conflicts, (2) respect rules of war, (3) leave no one behind (refugees and displaced persons, women, young people, vulnerable populations), (4) work differently to end need (planning, consideration of beneficiaries, humanitarian-development coordination), and (5) invest in humanity (by reducing risk and vulnerability, increasing stability, and building local capacities).

During this summit, France was especially committed to bolstering political mobilization to prevent and resolve conflicts, protect civilians and comply with international humanitarian law, and encourage local and national stakeholders to increase education efforts in crisis situations and to better coordinate humanitarian and development action.

During the preparation phase for the World Humanitarian Summit, the United Nations Secretary-General created a High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. In its report, the panel proposed the “Grand Bargain”, an agreement between donors and aid providers to thoroughly reform the world humanitarian system based on ten priorities to address the identified financing shortcomings.

In autumn 2017, France endorsed the Grand Bargain, which includes a list of 52 commitments related to the ten priorities and a process to implement them, overseen by ten working groups managed jointly by a donor and an aid provider. This is the main forum where donors and aid providers work together to improve the efficiency of humanitarian action. As of 1 January 2018, it had been endorsed by 55 humanitarian stakeholders (including 17 of the 20 largest global donors, all UN humanitarian agencies and most UN development-related agencies, the ICRC, various NGO coordinators and major NGOs) and is a cornerstone in the negotiations to reform the world humanitarian system.

### **Grand Bargain priorities**

- Transparency
- Support for local stakeholders
- Monetary aid
- Harmonization of procedures and reduction of agencies' structural costs
- Joint analysis of needs
- Greater inclusion of aid beneficiaries in decision-making
- Joint multiannual humanitarian and development planning and financing
- Increase in share of non-earmarked funding
- Streamlined reporting requirements
- Humanitarian-development nexus

As humanitarian crises and needs continue to grow, and following the French government's commitments during the World Humanitarian Summit and for the Grand Bargain, as well as its endorsement of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the principles and good practices promoted by the Good Humanitarian Donorship, France has drawn up a new Humanitarian Strategy (2018–2022). To create this new strategy, France worked in conjunction with its national partners (through the Humanitarian Consultation Group, which brings together France's two major humanitarian organizations and government representatives every two months) as well as European and international partners.

France has also drawn lessons from its previous Humanitarian Strategy (2012–2017), which was subject to a mid-term review and ex-post evaluation. The French initiative was commended for its reactivity and flexibility and proved effective in dealing with humanitarian emergencies. However, due to limited resources and insufficient coordination with development stakeholders, it was unable to fully address issues stemming from the rising number of prolonged crises.

This new Humanitarian Strategy has three main areas of focus:

- 1.** Pursue active humanitarian diplomacy to promote and strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law
- 2.** Allocate greater resources to support more effective and transparent humanitarian action
- 3.** Integrate humanitarian action into sustained crisis support

The strategy will be subject to a mid-term review as part of the 5th National Humanitarian Conference in 2020, when France's major humanitarian aid stakeholders meet with government representatives. It will be reviewed again in 2022 and will be discussed regularly by the Humanitarian Consultation Group.

## **II. Renewed humanitarian diplomacy to strengthen IHL compliance**

France is committed to promoting and ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. France has continually stressed the universality of IHL rules, which apply to all parties involved in a conflict, regardless of the type of conflict. It promotes all actions to prevent the exploitation and politicization of humanitarian aid, which run counter to humanitarian principles. It is also especially concerned with training its diplomats on humanitarian law, particularly through its partnership with the ICRC.

Within international forums and in the field, France works to ensure IHL compliance in line with two areas of focus:

### **1. Promote IHL compliance through international forums and developing stronger humanitarian dialogue with international partners**

France will pursue its efforts within international forums to ensure the effective application of the Geneva Conventions and all IHL rules, including by fighting the impunity of those who commit violations, and by developing the practices of its armed forces on the ground. France has a major role to play in mobilizing States at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Accordingly, it promotes six types of actions:

#### **a) Strengthen protection for humanitarian and medical personnel and children in situations of armed conflict, in addition to fighting violence against women**

Through its activities to promote IHL compliance, especially within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as well as the General Assembly and Human Rights Council, France aims to support the protection of civilians in armed conflict, in line with basic IHL principles that prohibit targeting civilians and civilian property, and allowing unobstructed access of humanitarian stakeholders to populations in need. It will continue its efforts to enforce compliance with humanitarian principles in adopted texts, whether humanitarian omnibus resolutions or crisis resolutions. Three specific themes will be given particular attention.

#### **Ensure the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel.**

It is essential that humanitarian aid workers are allowed to carry out their basic mission of safely providing assistance to victims of armed conflict and that attacks are prevented against medical personnel, who benefit from special protection under IHL. In addition to the short-term consequences for victims, such attacks have long-term consequences on the viability of medical infrastructure in countries in conflict and on populations' access to medical care.

Given the increasing number of attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel, France is working to further mobilize the international community within United



Nations forums, especially the UNSC, which in 2014 adopted resolution 2175 on the protection of humanitarian personnel and UN and associated personnel in armed conflict. In 2016, France actively participated in adopting resolution 2286 through which the UNSC, which for the first time was called on to address the issue of attacks against medical personnel and infrastructure, condemned such attacks and asked all parties in armed conflict to comply with international humanitarian law. Within the framework of its UNSC presidency and in line with its commitment to the issue, France also organized a ministerial meeting on 31 October 2017 in New York on the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel in armed conflict. Following this meeting, 13 countries<sup>1</sup> signed a political declaration proposed by France through which they commit to shore up their national legislation and operational practices to protect medical personnel.

**Decision 1:** France commits to build a strong coalition of States to step up protection of humanitarian and medical personnel in conflicts, building on its initiative launched on 31 October 2017 at the UNSC, and to obtain support for the political declaration adopted at that time.

**Pursue its action to protect children in armed conflict, as part of its efforts to promote the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles.**

France has long been committed to protecting children in armed conflict and has been especially active within the Security Council to ensure it tackles this issue. Since 1999, the Security Council has adopted nine resolutions pertaining to children in armed conflict (the most recent was resolution 2225, adopted on 18 June 2015). In particular, resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005), adopted with France's backing, create a monitoring and reporting mechanism for six types of children's rights violations as well as a Security Council Working Group tasked with monitoring these violations. France worked to ensure that infringements of the first five of the six grave violations<sup>2</sup> will lead to a State's inclusion on the Secretary-General's black list (rather than only the recruitment of children, as allowed for by the original mechanism).

After the adoption of the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments in 2007, which set out concrete measures for prevention, fighting impunity, protecting children and reuniting them with their family or community, France organized a high-level conference in partnership with UNICEF in February 2018 to review the actions carried out over the past decade and to re-mobilize international partners on the fate of children in armed conflict. To date, 108 States have endorsed these texts.

**Decision 2:** France will pursue its efforts to promote the protection of children in armed conflict and will continue working with UNICEF to promote the universal adoption of the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to France, the signatory countries were Sweden, Spain, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Peru, Senegal, Switzerland, Uruguay, Canada and Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Killing and maiming of children, recruitment or use of children as soldiers, sexual violence against children, abduction of children, attacks against schools or hospitals, denial of humanitarian access for children.

**Combat the use of sexual violence against women in armed conflict as a war tactic and promote the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.**

With a view to implementing the UN Security Council's resolutions that make up the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and France's International Strategy for Gender Equality 2018–2022, France is also focusing on the specific needs of women, in accordance with its commitments made during the World Humanitarian Summit. Women are often the first civilian victims of conflicts, with rape and sexual violence used against them as war tactics. France is continuing to fight against the regression of women's rights around the world, especially through the framework of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs' new Strategy for Gender Equality, presented on 8 March 2018.

**Decision 3:** France will pursue its commitment to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda by supporting actions that provide specific assistance to women and girls to further their reintegration and empowerment and especially income-generating activities.

b) Work to create a forum of States on compliance with international humanitarian law through discussions held for the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held every four years, is a unique forum that brings together States that are parties to the Geneva Conventions and the members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to discuss issues related to implementing IHL.

Resolution 2, adopted during the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (December 2015), "recommends the continuation of an inclusive, State-driven intergovernmental process based on the principle of consensus after the 32nd International Conference and in line with the guiding principles enumerated in operative paragraph 1 to find agreement on features and functions of a potential forum of States and to find ways to enhance the implementation of IHL using the potential of the International Conference and IHL regional forums in order to submit the outcome of this intergovernmental process to the 33rd International Conference".

France supports creating a new mechanism through this framework to strengthen IHL compliance. This mechanism, both non-binding and created on a voluntary basis, must avoid any politicization of any issues raised, in line with the guiding principles outlined in resolution 2 adopted by the 32nd Conference.

**Decision 4:** France will continue to participate in the intergovernmental process begun following the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to reach an agreement on a potential forum of States to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law by creating a space for dialogue.

c) Pursue the initiative to regulate the use of the veto in the UNSC in cases of recognized mass atrocities that constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law

Given the paralysis of the Security Council in the Syrian crisis, in 2013 France

proposed that the permanent members voluntarily, collectively and informally pledge not to use the veto in cases of recognized mass atrocities. This regulation would not involve any amendment to the UN Charter.

The veto initiative was received favourably by the United Nations and is now at the centre of debates on Security Council reform, and more generally, preventing mass atrocities. As of 1 September 2017, around a hundred countries had signed a political declaration presented by France and co-sponsored by Mexico to support these efforts.

To set the example, the French President announced on 28 September 2015, during the United Nations' 70th anniversary, that France would unilaterally refrain from using the veto to oppose a credible resolution to end a mass atrocity.

**Decision 5: France will pursue its efforts to rally as much support as possible, including from permanent members of the Security Council, for its goal of regulating the use of the veto in the event of mass atrocities.**

d) **Combat the impunity of IHL violators**

To ensure full compliance with IHL and international human rights law, France considers combatting impunity for crimes that violate IHL and human rights a top priority. At a time when conflicts and crises are becoming recurring and perpetual problems, France will continue to push for investigative mechanisms within the United Nations, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations to facilitate investigations and help bring to justice those responsible for the most serious international law violations committed in Syria since March 2011. France also supports actions such as cooperating with the International Independent Investigation Commission on Syria under the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the mechanism to fight against impunity for crimes committed by Daesh in Iraq. This mechanism, which will be managed by a special adviser, was set up to gather evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide committed in Iraq by persons affiliated with Daesh, and France will cooperate in its investigations in accordance with international commitments. France also remains committed to the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, launched in Paris on 23 January 2018 and endorsed by 25 countries.

**Decision 6: France will continue to combat impunity to the fullest extent, particularly with regard to IHL violations in conflicts, and especially in the Middle East.**

e) **Strive to achieve full recognition and application of international humanitarian law to cyberspace for armed conflicts and the use of potential lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS)**

France considers that international law, and especially international humanitarian law, fully applies to cyberspace. Accordingly, any cyber warfare carried out during an international or non-international armed conflict must respect the rules

applicable to hostilities in these situations. France actively participated in work by five UN Groups of Government Experts (GGEs) on Developments in the Field of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the context of international security. In its 2015 report, the fourth GGE noted that the principles of humanity, necessity, proportionality and distinction could be applicable to the use of ICTs by States in armed conflict situations. Future work within appropriate forums could lead to more precise definitions of these concepts and the way in which these principles are applied to different actors' actions in cyberspace.

The potential development of lethal autonomous weapons systems raises numerous ethical, legal and operational questions. This is why consideration of this issue – especially during international discussions by the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) – is of vital importance for France. In 2013, France initiated these discussions within the CCW, a forum that brings together diplomatic, technical and legal experts and provides a relevant framework in which to address this complex issue. Since that time, France has continued to make substantial contributions to the debates, by presiding over the work on the issue in 2014 and putting forward working documents and concrete proposals. LAWS are a prospective issue: to date, they do not exist and it is difficult to say where current technological advances stand in terms of their future existence or capacities. However, France does plan to take part in discussions on how potential LAWS are characterized, and reaffirms its position that IHL applies to them just as it does to any other weapons systems.

**Decision 7:** France will work with its partners and in relevant forums to ensure the full application of international humanitarian law to cyberspace. It will continue to actively participate in international discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems within the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons, especially as regards the application of international humanitarian law.

f) **Develop humanitarian dialogue with our main partners**

Efforts to promote advocacy and form a coalition to support IHL compliance at the multilateral level must be bolstered by supporting humanitarian dialogue with our main partners, whether with stakeholders of a conflict or emerging humanitarian actors with whom partnerships should be established.

**Decision 8:** France will develop constructive and demanding humanitarian dialogue through regular consultations with its main partners, whether parties to a conflict or emerging humanitarian actors, to promote IHL compliance and encourage possible cooperation.

This commitment within international forums will go hand in hand with efforts on the ground to strengthen IHL compliance by French and foreign armed forces.

## **2. Strengthen and promote the operational practices of the armed forces**

The French Ministry for the Armed Forces is the main stakeholder in communicating IHL principles to its armed forces and partners as well as in the operational implementation of IHL on the ground. Accordingly, it considers

training of the armed forces in international humanitarian law to be a priority. All military personnel learn about the ethical and moral rules related to their profession during basic training. Subsequently and throughout their service, and especially when preparing for a military deployment, all military personnel, regardless of rank, are reminded about the rights and duties of soldiers with regard to national and international law, and particularly international humanitarian law. The Ministry also ensures training for legal advisers who will be assigned to various command levels of foreign theatres of operations.

With regard to their responsibility to communicate and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, the legal advisers of the Ministry for the Armed Forces receive specific training, including to certify their aptitude to be assigned to various command levels of foreign theatres of operations. They also participate in multiple training programmes held in France or abroad, especially those at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL) in San Remo for military officers and lawyers from around the world. Since 2016 and in cooperation with the International Organisation of La Francophonie, the IIHL has trained officers from countries providing troops and formed police units to UN peacekeeping missions. These training programmes help ensure that national training meets ethical and professional requirements (especially pertaining to international humanitarian law and rules of conduct in military operations). France has also deployed officers to EU training missions for armed forces in Mali (EUTM Mali), Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) and, more recently, the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

For its operational practices for civilian protection in armed conflict, France targets efforts on humanitarian and medical personnel, in connection with the political initiative endorsed by France and 12 other States on 31 October 2017, as well as on the most vulnerable populations, such as children. France is dedicated to promoting a policy to improve the protection of children in armed conflict, in keeping with its recent commitments undertaken during the “Protecting Children from War” ministerial conference to protect children in armed conflict (held in Paris in February 2017), the Vancouver Principles in 2017, and the Safe Schools Declaration.

**Decision 9:** France will pursue its efforts to communicate IHL principles to its armed forces and abroad. It will continue implementing its operational practices for protecting civilians in external theatres of operations.

### III. Greater resources for more effective action

#### 1. A significant increase in resources for French humanitarian action

French humanitarian aid has three main components:

- International contributions to United Nations humanitarian agencies and the ICRC.
- French Food Aid (AAP) is granted by decision of the Interministerial Food Aid Committee (CIAA) and funds actions to improve resiliency and food security through NGOs and international organizations (mainly the World Food Programme, as well as the FAO, UNRWA, UNICEF and ICRC).
- The Emergency Humanitarian Fund (FUH), which finances emergency humanitarian actions through subsidies to NGOs, payments to international organizations or state interventions (agency lines of credit; deployment of personnel and equipment). The FUH also covers the support fund for the victims of ethnic and religious violence and crisis resolution appropriations. Finally, it receives voluntary contributions from local and regional authorities.

To provide an adequate response to growing needs, France will allocate greater resources to these humanitarian aid instruments, as part of its increased official development assistance (set to rise to 0.55% of GDP in 2022).

The Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID), convened by the Prime Minister on 8 February 2018, undertook a strong commitment in this respect, announcing that “France [...] will play its part to increase global funding for humanitarian action and post-crisis stabilization. In 2022, it will make a bilateral and multilateral contribution of €500 million to these actions, channelled through the Emergency Humanitarian Fund, the UN’s humanitarian agencies and bilateral commitments such as the French Food Aid Programme.” The French contribution to humanitarian action will be more than triple compared to 2017.

These greater resources, coupled with France’s contributions to the European Union’s humanitarian budget (France is the second leading contributor to the EU budget and second largest humanitarian donor in the world), make France one of the top three European donors and top five global donors for humanitarian action. Larger voluntary humanitarian contributions to United Nations agencies and programmes as well as the ICRC will enable France to remain amongst the major donors and influence fund and agency strategies.

**Decision 10:** France will provide a total of €500 million in humanitarian aid contributions to become one of the top three European donors and one of the top five global donors.

To support this new dynamic, France will strive to mobilize complementary resources. Accordingly, it will extend its policy of collaboration with companies and corporate foundations, including with 23 organizations that signed humanitarian partnership agreements on 19 December 2017 with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. It will encourage local and regional authorities and

individuals who wish to participate in humanitarian crisis response efforts by allocating state resources for humanitarian action expertise to shore up support funds created for this purpose. Finally, it will bolster exchanges with large emerging countries to encourage them to contribute more to international humanitarian efforts and help them structure their humanitarian action as needed.

Along with these increased resources, greater effectiveness and transparency must also be ensured.

## **2. Renewed efforts for transparency and accountability**

Increased resources devoted to humanitarian action, whether bilateral or multilateral, require greater transparency and accountability for how that aid is used, not only to report France's humanitarian action to its citizens, national representatives and the international community, but to improve efficiency as well. It is a matter of ensuring legitimacy and credibility for French humanitarian action.

France's many humanitarian stakeholders and instruments are assets that must be combined with strong dialogue to ensure that information about projects is widely available and fully communicated with the public. Funding assessment procedures will be improved to achieve greater accountability on project results and help new projects better take into account lessons learned. Funding will be exhaustively tracked through various databases on humanitarian action (EDRIS for the European Commission, FTS for the United Nations, DAC for the OECD, IATI), France's annual report on humanitarian action, and the crosscutting French policy document on official development assistance submitted to the French Parliament.

**Decision 11:** The French institutions involved in humanitarian action will draw up a new methodology and simplified tracking tool for humanitarian funding that is more accessible and used by all relevant departments.

Aid beneficiaries must also be held to account. Accordingly, France reaffirms its endorsement of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) and to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) five accountability commitments to affected populations. France will encourage the partners it funds to implement feedback mechanisms and help them revise their projects accordingly.

## **3. Improved efficiency through harmonization and streamlining**

In recent years, donor demands for access to and reporting of funding procedures have risen considerably. While these shifts correspond to a legitimate desire to improve accountability as humanitarian aid budgets have increased, they have also had negative effects. More burdensome procedures and bureaucracy slow access to funding: the average time between project presentation and receipt of funds is between three and four months at the global level. This weakens stakeholders' ability to respond quickly to humanitarian

crises and absorbs substantial resources, to the detriment of meeting populations' needs. It also encourages the creation of large structures, consolidation and standardization, to the detriment of a diverse humanitarian system to which more flexible, medium-sized organizations could be a genuine asset. Finally, it hampers efforts to grow support for local stakeholders.

Increased demands for transparency and accountability must not come at the expense of effectiveness and diversity. France, which has always been committed to maintaining flexible methods of access and reporting, will pursue its efforts at the national and international levels, advocating for process harmonization and streamlining. Accordingly, from 2018 it will adopt the pilot project to harmonize and streamline the reporting processes put forward in the Grand Bargain for all its bilateral humanitarian response funding mechanisms.

**Decision 12:** From 2018 France will adopt the pilot project to harmonize and streamline the reporting processes put forward in the Grand Bargain for all its bilateral humanitarian response funding mechanisms.

France will also work to increase efficiency through innovation (partnerships with non-traditional stakeholders, using new technologies and approaches in humanitarian responses, innovative funding schemes, etc.) and will continue to support the French research ecosystem in the humanitarian field. In particular and when relevant, France will seek to provide aid through cash transfers (which may, depending on the situation, help strengthen beneficiary dignity, reduce costs by limiting logistical operations and increase resilience by supporting local production) and to implement the ten principles on cash-based assistance adopted by the European Council on 22 June 2015.

In addition to mobilizing the dedicated departments, these efforts will utilize the entire Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs network – especially its embassies, where humanitarian experts play a decisive role in delivering aid – and its partners (United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, companies and corporate foundations, etc.), with which France will maintain strong dialogue.



## **IV. Integrating humanitarian action into sustained crisis support**

### **1. Bolster the humanitarian-development nexus**

On 8 February 2018, the CICID announced that France would “work to strengthen [...] coordination between short-term emergency response instruments (humanitarian, stabilization) and long-term instruments [...] and ensure implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus”.

Coordinating immediate responses to a humanitarian crisis and sustained efforts to address the causes and consequences of the crisis has long been a concern. However, it has become more pressing with recent shifts in the types of crises around the world, such as crises due to geopolitical conflict giving way to those of a more socio-political nature; the soaring number of prolonged crises; crises with interconnected economic, social, security and environmental aspects; and the regionalization and globalization of crises and their consequences. These issues have created veritable “humanitarian traps”.

Now more than ever, moving past emergency humanitarian responses – which remain indispensable – is crucial to break the vicious cycles by addressing the root causes of fragility. The aim, endorsed by both the European Union (European Council conclusions from 19 May 2017) and the United Nations (New Way of Working), is to base support on population needs rather than aid stakeholders’ conventional scopes of action. The silo mentality must also be overcome to enable coordinated action that leverages expertise from professional development and humanitarian communities and the comparative advantages of their respective actions.

Providing a sustained response to emergency situations also requires preventive action and making humanitarian aid part of a comprehensive approach to crisis and fragility management that includes diplomacy, peacekeeping, emergency, stabilization and development actions.

France supports joint analysis of the context, risks, factors of fragility, population needs and national and local capacities. Where possible, this joint analysis should result in concerted planning of actions on the ground based on humanitarian and development stakeholders’ priorities and contributions. This implies close cooperation between these two communities, in line with their respective mandates and without compromising humanitarian principles.

The French mechanism has undergone considerable reforms in recent years to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus:

- A stabilization mission tasked with supporting the initial steps in crisis recovery (socioeconomic development, reconciliation, governance support, re-establishment of public services, demining, etc.) was created by the Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS) of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.
- The Peace and Resilience Fund, which seeks to reduce vulnerabilities, was created by the Agence Française de Développement (French Development

Agency, AFD) and receives annual funding of €100 million to address the chronic causes of crises and prevent their regional spread. The CICID of 8 February 2018 decided to double this budget by 2020. The fund rounds off an array of financial instruments (calls for crisis and crisis recovery projects, funds for education and crisis recovery expertise, crisis and conflict intervention tools, 10% reserve of the NGO mechanism) designed to facilitate the AFD's intervention in crisis situations. The AFD has a crosscutting unit specialized in vulnerability response (Crisis and Conflict Unit) and in 2017 it adopted a crosscutting intervention framework on vulnerability.

- A French response strategy to situations of fragility was adopted during the CICID of 8 February 2018, which places prevention, resilience building and addressing chronic causes of fragility at the core of its comprehensive approach that seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages and complementary actions of all French stakeholders (diplomacy, security, humanitarian, stabilization, development).
- At the strategic level, a framework for cooperation between French humanitarian and development stakeholders was created, with interministerial consultation meetings on countries dealing with crisis and post-crisis situations. At the operational level, bimonthly consultation meetings are held between the CDCS (humanitarian, stabilization) and the AFD (development) to carry out joint analyses and planning. Several joint projects have already been put in place.

An additional phase will be initiated with a new mechanism to coordinate calls for crisis and post-crisis humanitarian and stabilization projects supported by the AFD and funding from the CDCS, which will help systematize this joint approach and raise its visibility.

The AFD's Strategic Orientation Board, which meets annually and is chaired by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, will examine the actions undertaken to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus.

**Decision 13:** France will develop a long-term strategy, as early as the emergency response phase and where justified by the context or crisis, to respond to post-crisis challenges and recovery, developed jointly by the French Government and all humanitarian response and development stakeholders. A mechanism to coordinate the CDCS humanitarian and stabilization actions and calls for crisis and post-crisis projects supported by the AFD will implement this strategy on the ground.

Generally speaking, France is committed to strengthening coordination between humanitarian and development actions by aligning its Humanitarian Strategy with French policy guidelines for international solidarity as set out by the CICID, convened by the Prime Minister on 8 February 2018. France made clear its desire to "direct more of its official development assistance towards [...] crisis and fragility responses", a priority in which humanitarian action plays an essential role. France is committed to emphasizing education, climate, healthcare and gender equality.

France will earmark a significant portion of its humanitarian aid for education projects in emergency situations, especially through its partnership with UNICEF. Additionally, it will support victims of natural disasters, which are increasingly linked to climate change, and implement natural disaster preparedness and risk reduction programmes. It will also pursue its efforts in the field of healthcare as well as for related water and sanitation actions. Finally, because women are the first victims of armed conflicts and forced displacements as well as key stakeholders in conflict resolution and recovery, France – which has endorsed a call to action against gender-based violence in emergency situations – will apply a gender marker to support gender equality in humanitarian projects. More generally, it will shore up its efforts to include the most vulnerable populations in the humanitarian response, and especially people with disabilities, in line with the commitments of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

**Decision 14:** France will apply the OECD’s gender marker to all of its bilateral humanitarian projects and will continue to advocate for UN and European agencies, funds and programmes to include it.

At the multilateral level, France will continue to promote the humanitarian-development nexus by improving coordination between humanitarian action, the United Nations development system and international financing institutions, which must do more to support social sectors in fragile countries. In view of this, France will support the creation of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation requested by the Secretary-General as part of the UN development system reform. It will also advocate to ensure the committee has sufficiently ambitious goals to be effective and that lines of accountability are established between the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator and the OCHA to guarantee OCHA’s support for the coordinator. Another aspect of the humanitarian-development nexus will be to select resident coordinators with expertise in humanitarian action, especially when they are assigned the double role of resident and humanitarian coordinator, as set out in the reform. The best coordination will require a joint analysis of needs and planning. To this end, and as outlined by the reform, France would like for multiannual humanitarian response plans to be harmonized with the planning frameworks (UNDAF) to set and reach common goals. Finally, the restructuring of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) – which, depending on the topic, plans to work with the OCHA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) via the core group that meets four times a year – should help improve coordination on the ground.

France, which was a driving force behind OCHA’s creation in 1991, is committed to strengthening coordination amongst multilateral and bilateral donors and will continue such efforts in European and international bodies. Accordingly, it supports the development of mechanisms to combine resources from different donors, such as multi-donor and inter-agency pooled funds, to which it plans to contribute based on available means.

## 2. Build local stakeholders' capacities

This commitment to an approach that seeks to break down the silo mentality between short-term and long-term stakeholders goes hand in hand with capacity-building efforts for local stakeholders with a view to developing subsidiarity and appropriation rather than solely providing aid. Local stakeholders on the ground (public authorities, national societies of the Red Cross or Red Crescent, local civil society organizations) are often the first to take on humanitarian aid responsibilities. Their actions are decisive in improving crisis responses in terms of effectiveness (better access to populations, interventions that suit the context and beneficiary needs), efficiency (reduced costs, ability to assist greater numbers of beneficiaries), and especially sustainability and increased local resilience. As the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit stated, aid must be "as local as possible, as international as necessary". The Grand Bargain sets its signatories the task of allocating 25% of their funding to local stakeholders. International and local stakeholders are and will remain crucial and complementary in the coming years. This complementarity must be preserved while consolidating partnerships to further strengthen local stakeholders' capacities and autonomy.

Accordingly, France will rely on a capacity-building mechanism for local stakeholders to give each NGO project financed by the Emergency Humanitarian Fund a portion of funds for local stakeholder capacity building. A local marker will measure France's support, either direct or indirect, to local stakeholders and capacity-building efforts.

**Decision 15:** France will rely on a capacity-building mechanism for local stakeholders to give each NGO project financed by the Emergency Humanitarian Fund a portion of funds for capacity building of their local partners. It will also increase its funding for local stakeholders and will implement a marker to measure the degree of localization of its humanitarian action.

## **The 15 decisions of France's humanitarian strategy 2018–2022**

- 1.** France commits to build a strong coalition of States to step up protection of humanitarian and medical personnel in conflicts, building on its initiative launched on 31 October 2017 at the UNSC, and to obtain support for the political declaration adopted at that time.
- 2.** France will pursue its efforts to promote the protection of children in armed conflict and will continue working with UNICEF to promote the universal adoption of the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles.
- 3.** France will pursue its commitment to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda by supporting actions that provide specific assistance to women and girls to further their reintegration and empowerment and especially income-generating activities.
- 4.** France will continue to participate in the intergovernmental process begun following the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to reach an agreement on a potential forum of States to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law by creating a space for dialogue.
- 5.** France will pursue its efforts to rally as much support as possible, including from permanent members of the Security Council, for its goal of regulating the use of the veto in the event of mass atrocities.
- 6.** France will continue to combat impunity to the fullest extent, particularly with regard to IHL violations in conflicts, and especially in the Middle East.
- 7.** France will work with its partners and in relevant forums to ensure the full application of international humanitarian law to cyberspace. It will continue to actively participate in international discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems within the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons, especially as regards the application of international humanitarian law.
- 8.** France will develop constructive and demanding humanitarian dialogue through regular consultations with its main partners, whether parties to a conflict or emerging humanitarian actors, to promote IHL compliance and encourage possible cooperation.
- 9.** France will pursue its efforts to communicate IHL principles to its armed forces and abroad. It will continue implementing its operational practices for protecting civilians in external theatres of operations.
- 10.** France will provide a total of €500 million in humanitarian aid contributions to become one of the top three European donors and one of the top five global donors.
- 11.** The French institutions involved in humanitarian action will draw up a new methodology and simplified tracking tool for humanitarian funding that is more accessible and used by all relevant departments.
- 12.** From 2018 France will adopt the pilot project to harmonize and streamline the reporting processes put forward in the Grand Bargain for all its bilateral

humanitarian response funding mechanisms.

**13.** France will develop a long-term strategy, as early as the emergency response phase and where justified by the context or crisis, to respond to post-crisis challenges and recovery, developed jointly by the French Government and all humanitarian response and development stakeholders. A mechanism to coordinate the CDCS humanitarian and stabilization actions and calls for crisis and post-crisis projects supported by the AFD will implement this strategy on the ground.

**14.** France will apply the OECD's gender marker to all of its bilateral humanitarian projects and will continue to advocate for UN and European agencies, funds and programmes to include it.

**15.** France will rely on a capacity-building mechanism for local stakeholders to give each NGO project financed by the Emergency Humanitarian Fund a portion of funds for capacity building of their local partners. It will also increase its funding for local stakeholders and will implement a marker to measure the degree of localization of its humanitarian action.