Graduate School of Development Studies

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION FOR EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATIONS: The Case of the 2007 Floods In Northern Ghana

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my Parents Buwumkani and Ashetu for educating me and to the whole family for their support.

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I thank the Almighty God for my life and for giving the wisdom, knowledge and strength to carry out this work. I am also grateful to NUFFIC and the Dutch Government for the opportunity given me to reach this far.

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List of Acronyms

ACDEP ……Association of Church Development Projects

AGREDS …… Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services

CBOs ……Community Based Organizations

CCG …… Christian Council of Ghana page 26

CRS ……Catholic Relief Services

CSC ……Cross-Sector Collaboration

CSCs …… Cross-Sector Collaborations

CSM ……Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis

GHANEP ……Ghana Network for Peace Building

GHS …… Ghana Health Service

GNFS ……Ghana National Fire Service

GRCS …… Ghana Red Cross society

GPRTU ……Ghana Private Road Transport Union

IAC ……Inter-Agency Coordination

IFRC ……International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

IMTF ……Inter-Ministerial Task Force

INGOC ……Inter-NGOs Consortium

INGOs ……International Non-Governmental Organisations

IOM …… International Organisation for Migration

IOC …… Inter-Organizational Collaboration

LNGOs …… Local Non-Governmental Organisations

MoFA ……Ministry of Food and Agriculture

MoU ……Memorandum of Understanding

NADMO ……National Disaster Management Organisation

NGOs ……Non-Governmental Organisations

NR ……Northern Region

NRCF ……Northern Region Coordination Forum

OCHA ……Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

RCC ……Regional Coordinating Council

RUMNET ……Rural Media Network

SoE ……State of Emergency

UN ……United Nations

UNAs ……UN Agencies

UNDAC ……United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

UNDP ……United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA ……United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR …… United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF ……United Nations Children Fund

USAID …… United States Agency for International Development

WHO ……Wold Health Organisation

WFP ……World Food Programme

WV ……World Vision

Abstract

In the recent past, international and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have increasingly played a vital role in humanitarian relief operations in various parts of the world. Currently, there is a call for proper coordination between international relief agencies and local organisation and institutions to ensure efficient delivery of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of disaster affected communities. This research explores inter-agency coordination in humanitarian response to disasters and emergency situations with specific reference to the 2007 floods in Northern Ghana. In particular, the research explores the inter-agency coordination efforts in response to the disaster with regards to three factors: initial conditions, the process of coordination itself and structural administration. The research looks at how coordination efforts affect the eventual outcomes of the humanitarian response. It also examines the relationship between international and local organizations and whether this relationship enhanced the targeting and delivery of humanitarian relief. Semi-structured interviews with managers as well as group discussion with members of the affected communities formed a central part of the research method.

Evidence from this research suggests that the inability of local implementing partner organizations to target the most affected communities for relief assistance can be as important in explaining an unsatisfactory relief response as poor and inadequate coordination among the various agencies and actors involved in relief operations. Even if there were proper coordination among the participating organizations to achieve synergy, the lack of proper targeting at the distribution end can result in minimally effective outcomes. Consequently, organizations should seek to improve inter-agency coordination and at the same time to improve the capacities of local implementing partner organizations to properly target and effectively distribute relief assistance to those who need it most.

Relevance to Development Studies

Effective coordination in emergency relief intervention is closely interwoven with the development process. Disasters and Emergencies are costly in terms of human life and resources and are disruptive of the development process. The need to link emergency relief coordination to development cannot be overstated as emergencies have grown steadily and larger. Better development can reduce the need for emergency and well coordinated emergencies can also lead to development. However, emergency relief coordination has to be very responsive so as to preserve livelihoods and safeguard developmental assets otherwise development will be undermined.

Keywords

Inter-agency, coordination, humanitarian relief, Disaster

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Inter-Agency Coordination (IAC) in recent times is increasingly recognised as an important and desirable means of dealing with humanitarian crisis in order to ensure efficient delivery of relief, rehabilitation of infrastructure and the reconstruction of disaster-affected communities. This is particularly so in an interdependent world where the involvement of a range of actors and co-ordination among their activities is needed in order to address a given disaster situation in all its dimensions.

In spite of the necessity of IAC, it is difficult in practice to coordinate the activities of various organizations and of different jurisdictions in order to achieve the common goal of fast and effective relief for the most affected populations. The literature on IAC can be broadly grouped under two headings. First, studies that mainly considers the challenges to achieving IAC (Kjellman et al. 2003: 856). Kjellman et al (2003: 856) note that no matter how good the intentions of the organizations involved, coordination efforts may not be particularly successful for a variety of reasons including the urgency to meet all the basic needs of affected groups at once, ineffective utilization of resources, political control of strategies and supplies, and goals that may be incompatible with each other.

Secondly, studies which prescribe conditions that might facilitate successful collaboration among different agencies (Bryson et al. 2006: 44). Bryson et al (2006) reviewed an extensive literature on cross-sector collaboration in terms of five central themes - (i) initial conditions and/ the environment; (ii) process components; (iii) structure and governance; (iv) contingencies and constraints; and (v) outcomes. Based on this review of the literature, the authors outline conditions that may be favourable to the success of IAC. This latter group of studies provide a context for this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

Complex emergencies resulting from conflict and natural disasters, have intensified in many regions of the world including Ghana, and require complex humanitarian relief responses (UN Economic and Social Council Substantive Session, 2001). Asia recorded 682 natural disasters between 1990 and 2007 which killed an estimated 400,000 people and caused severe economic damage (Heltberg 2007: 681). The Persian Gulf War and the U.S. missile attack on Baghdad, Iraq resulted in human displacement and hordes of Iraqi refugees at the Turkish border. The Somalia civil strife led to "the bloody inter-clan bloodshed, banditry, and looting that imperilled the civilian population" (Minear 2002: 1).

West Africa experienced severe drought in 1972 and 1973, referred to in the literature as the great West African Drought. This badly affected agriculture and livestock breeding in the entire Sahelian region. The droughts were an economic disaster because majority of the people in West Africa were (and remain) dependent on farming and livestock breeding activities for their basic livelihoods. This event was the worst natural disaster since the 1911-14 droughts and led to massive local and international relief efforts, bringing in hundreds of thousands of tons of relief aid from the international community (Derrick 1997: 537).

In August and early September 2007, heavy rainfall combined with the spillage of the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso led to severe flooding in several West African countries. The consequences were the loss of lives, displacement of vulnerable persons and the destruction of key infrastructure, as well as food stocks and livestock throughout the region. Regional estimates indicated that as many as 800,000 people were affected by the floods in Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali, The Gambia, Niger, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Benin. Access to affected population was impeded by the destruction of key infrastructure (Ghana), poor road conditions (Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger), and insecurity (Iferouane, northern Niger). Three countries were among the worst affected by the floods:

Ghana, Burkina Faso and Togo(United Nations Economic and Social Council Substantive Session 2001).

Floods are common phenomenon in Ghana, hence in some communities coping mechanisms are already in place. However, in 2007 the combined events of prolonged dry spells, abnormal torrential rains and the spillage of the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso caused a humanitarian emergency that overwhelmed existing coping mechanisms of local communities. Consequently, already very vulnerable populations in the three Northern regions of Ghana (Upper East, Upper West and Northern Region) were among the severely affected. About 260,000 people were displaced or affected, with 75,000 particularly vulnerable and in immediate need of assistance. Twenty people were killed in the event (ibid, 2007). The disasters not only resulted in the loss of life and resources, but also affected the longer-term economic wellbeing and living conditions of the people very adversely.

This situation resulted in multiple responses from various organizations. The international community (mainly United Nations (UN) agencies), government bodies, international governmental and non-governmental organizations all responded to the plight of affected populations by providing relief aid to the stricken countries. In the wake of the social and economic consequences of the flood disaster, the government and community organisations who responded were overwhelmed.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

As a result, the Government of Ghana appealed for assistance from the international and national community, including International bodies such as the UN, various charity organizations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), philanthropists, religious bodies, government and donor agencies.

The evolving responses from all these agencies needed to be coordinated and integrated into a coherent framework for action for a number of reasons. First, although the government has its own emergency response organization, the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), this organisation has limited capacity to coordinate responses to the emergency situation.

Second, most local organizations did not have emergency plans incorporated into their regular development programmes. Finally, whilst some of international agencies and NGOs did have emergency plans, these were either not regularly updated or often not fully integrated into a National emergency plan so as to provide a comprehensive emergency plan that could be used to coordinate a range of different kinds of humanitarian responses. This paper explores the process of IAC among various donors and other agencies, and considers how the coordination, or lack of it, affected the capacity of implementing partners to target the most affected populations in Northern Region (NR), taking the case of the floods of 2007.

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The research is premised on the hypothesis that weak capacity and capabilities among local implementing partner organizations to target the most affected people inhibited the effective delivery of humanitarian relief in the 2007 floods and their aftermath in the NR of Ghana.

1.5 OVERALL OBJECTIVES

This research examines the coordination efforts of Government institutions, international agencies and NGOs and how these efforts helped to meet the needs of affected people during and the aftermath of the flood disaster in the NR of Ghana in 2007.

1.5.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the process of coordination between the various agencies
2. To identify the factors that facilitated or inhibited the coordination efforts of the different agencies in addressing the humanitarian crisis following the flood disaster in the NR of Ghana.
3. To assess the relationship between key agencies of Government, international organisations and local institutions in terms of coordination and capacity building for the delivery of humanitarian relief in this case.

1.6 CENTRAL QUESTION

The key question is: To what extent did governmental, local and international agencies coordinate their activities in the delivery of emergency humanitarian relief to the affected communities during and after the floods of 2007 in the NR of Ghana?

1.6.1 SUB-QUESTIONS

The following sub-questions have been used to structure the presentation of findings and the chapters of this study:

1. How did various relief agencies work together in the delivery of humanitarian relief?
2. What were the challenges and opportunities faced by both Local Non-Governmental Organisations (LNGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) by coordinating their activities in the delivery of humanitarian relief?
3. What benefits did this collaboration bring in terms of the effectiveness of addressing the disaster and the building of capacity among local organisations to respond effectively to similar emergencies in future?

1.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The management and coordination of disaster relief in humanitarian emergencies has often been a problem because emergency budgets tend to be chronically underfunded by governments and development agencies. Existing budgetary commitments and a number of allied constraints tend to result in emergency relief activities being relegated to the background except during disasters, by which time it may be too late. Due to these constraints, the coordination of disaster response especially by government agencies often tends to be poor. Furthermore, targeting the most affected and the most vulnerable communities in an emergency situation often becomes a problem. This is because many relief operations do not reach those most severely

affected. The study therefore examined IAC between local and international organisations and how this helped in targeting the most affected and most vulnerable people in the delivery of relief items, and in recovery and reconstruction activities. The 2007 floods in Northern Ghana as the example used to explore such issues.

Through this examination of one case in detail, the research contributed to current efforts at improving IAC during and following humanitarian relief operations. The research identified the obstacles to coordination among humanitarian relief agencies and offers some suggestions and possible strategies for promoting IAC in humanitarian relief operations, so as to produce improved and more balanced and rapid delivery of emergency relief in future. It is expected that the findings of this research will contribute in some positive way to the practice of humanitarian relief, policy formulation and further research, especially, but not only, in Ghana.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology used in the study and the reasons for the selection of particular NGOs, the methods used in selecting the participants, in data collection and in analysis. For the purposes of anonymity, the specific organizations studied are referred to in the main text of the study as organizations A, B, D, E, F, G, H and I. The communities will be represented by C1 and C2. Profiles of some of the selected organizations are presented in Appendix II.

The field research was conducted in the NR of Ghana between 15 July and 7 August 2008. The researcher was based in Tamale, the capital city of the NR and home to the UN Agencies (UNA) and almost all NGOs operating in the NR. A total of eight organizations were visited, including UNA, INGOs and LNGOs that were involved in relief operations. Two of the most affected communities were also visited during this period of the research in NR and one in the Upper East Region.

This research employed a mixed method by combining semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations of meetings,

as well as operations on site. These strategies for data collection worked well since the overall objective of this research was to explore IAC in response to the humanitarian needs of victims of the 2007 floods in Northern Ghana within selected organisations. Each of these is described below in turn.

(i) Semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with programme managers and officers, consultants, staff and administrators of government organisations. Qualitative methods of data collection using semi-structured interviews was preferred because the method brings out more clearly the subjective expressions of the affected people about the relief assistance as well as the narrations of managers, coordinators, consultants and other staff of government institutions, UNAs, INGOs and LNGOs. Data generated from interviews was the product of the local interaction of the researcher and the respondents (Macnaghten and Myers, 2004: 16).

A total of fourteen people with expertise in emergency responses, and with long service in their organizations or experience of active involvement in relief operations were interviewed in each of the selected organizations. Thirteen of the interviewees were males and one was a female. This gender imbalance was reflective of the way that men tend to dominate the positions and activities in relief organisations. Interviewing more women might have provided a different perspective on the research questions, but it is unlikely to have affected the outcome of the study. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of interviewees. The criteria for selection included their expertise in humanitarian assistance, involvement in relief intervention and their length of service in their various organizations. The interviews were all face to face and lasted approximately 35-45 minutes. A list of semi-structured questions based on the frameworks proposed by (Faulkner and S.Vikulov 2001: 331-344),(Ritchie 2004: 672) and Bryson et al (2006: 45) was used as an interview guide. However, the questions were more focused on inter-agency coordination in humanitarian relief operations.

(ii) In addition**, i**nformal discussions were conducted with focus groups and informal discussions and interviews with some beneficiaries. These personal interactions with beneficiaries of relief assistance in two communities were carried out to elicit their opinion and perceptions about relief assistance

in their areas and how the distribution was carried out. This was to ascertain whether the relief items did get through to the most affected people, how relief was distributed and in what quantities. Focus group discussions produced qualitative data that helped provide a deeper understanding of the range and depth of opinions, attitudes and beliefs about the process being researched. Rather than measure the number of people reached, for example, through quantitative data, it seemed more fruitful to consider the views and opinions of those directly affected by the 2007 floods in Northern Ghana (Cronin 2002: 170); (Macnaghten and Myers 2004: 68).

Two focus groups of between six and eight persons were organised in two of the three selected communities. The groups included those victims who had received assistance and those who had been affected but had not received any assistance. This distinction was to ensure that discussants freely discussed how they perceived and experienced the emergency support. Mixing the two categories of people could lead to antagonism as some felt personal about some comments made by others.

Information was also gathered from affected people in one community in the Upper East Region to validate information generated in the NR. The relatively small size of the focus groups was significant since this allowed the researcher to maintain control of the group, and also permitted all participants to have their in-depth say (Cronin, 2002: 170).

(iii) Finally participant observation methods were used to gather data on the disaster response process. The researcher attended a workshop that involved stakeholders from different organisations to discuss the lessons learnt from the relief operations and follow up on the tasks assigned various organisations. He also attended a meeting organised to draw inputs from various stakeholders to produce a national disaster response plan. The aim of participating was to observe and take note of the key issues that were inherent in the relief response.

1.9 LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations of the research topic selected was that the disaster was a very recent event. This means that there is not much literature about this case. The currency of the floods however makes it important to consider the lessons already, since post-relief reconstruction operations are still continuing as the research is completed. Another problem challenge was that the research required some key types of information from a range of relief agencies about their operations. However, since this information is not in the public domain and could only be obtained from the agencies themselves, being unable to obtain such data could affect the progress of this research. Prior contacts were therefore made with the various relief and other organisations studied before the field visit took place and this enabled these organisations to put together appropriate information on their operations for the researcher.

1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

The rest of the chapters are organised as follows. Chapter two reviews the literature on IAC and discusses the ethical, political and practical issues around in humanitarian action. It also outlines the conceptual and analytical framework of the study. In the third chapter, the context and response of the flood disaster are discussed focusing on the key actors/agencies in the IAC. Chapter four is the analysis and discussions of findings while and finally, Chapter five deals with the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2
CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the key concepts that are used in the essay to ensure a common understanding and discusses some of the more important debates on humanitarianism, focusing on the ethics, political and practical misgivings expressed by the authors. The chapter also reviews the literature on IAC and briefly outlines Bryson et al's (2006) framework for understanding cross-sector collaboration in terms of the five key dimensions, as listed in Chapter 1. Drawing on some propositions regarding each of the dimensions, the paper analyses the IAC initiatives that might have been required to address the humanitarian crisis following the 2007 floods in Northern Ghana.

2.2 HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

The term humanitarian action is used with different meanings and interpretations by politicians, soldiers, legal and political thinkers and aid and relief workers themselves. Humanitarian action is used broadly to include military as well as purely humanitarian intervention to save lives and bring humanitarian relief. (Archibugi 2003: 4) has drawn a useful distinction between military intervention and humanitarian relief operation.

> *A military intervention in an area is for the purpose of saving peoples from genocide or other major violations of human rights occurring and carried out by foreign institutions without the consent of a legitimate government*

On the other hand, relief aid to disaster victims is generally offered with the consent of the government of the affected countries and it rarely has any military component. For Daniele Archibugi, "such aid may be better described as humanitarian relief operations" (Archibugi, 2004: 4). The Oslo Guidelines defines humanitarian relief as aid to an affected population that seeks, as its

primary purpose, to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis-affected population. This is the sense in which the term is used in this paper. Such relief must be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality (Oslo Guidelines 2007: 3). In practice however, how to respect these principles whilst relieving suffering is a question that has triggered intense debate among academics and practitioners..

2.2.1 HUMANITY

The primary concern of human beings and of the international community in natural disaster and conflict situations are the protection and welfare of the individual and the safeguarding of basic human rights. This principle presuppose that humanitarian relief must be provided to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable in the affected population paying attention to children, women and the elderly wherever disaster occur without engaging in hostilities or taking sides of any kind and should be done without discrimination. Vaux, (2001: 2-5) refers to it as the "concern for the person in need" and noted that it is the basic moral value of humanitarian action and goes beyond the provision of "calories for the stomach and water for the throat" but it "entails the state of mind, sense of loss and the devaluation of life" (Vaux 2001: 2-5).

While this principle is the least controversial humanitarian relief action, (Slim 1997: 345) notes that much of the agreement seems to centre on a somewhat heretical understanding of the principle based on two views: a reductionist view which commodifies humanitarianism and relates it solely to material help (the what); and an aggrandising view which tends towards making humanitarian non-negotiable in war (the how).).

2.2.2 NEUTRALITY

The principle of neutrality is that humanitarian assistance must be provided without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature. Relief provided by humanitarian organisations for civilian populations in natural or other disaster situations should as far as possible be treated as humanitarian and non-political issue and should be

organised in such a way as to avoid prejudicing sovereign and other legal rights so that the confidence of the parties to a conflict in such organisations may be preserved. The general problem for relief operations in failed state[1] or collapsed states[2] is that the boundary between the political and humanitarian erodes, and the distinction between the two becomes blurred.

2.2.3 IMPARTIALITY

Impartiality as a principle of humanitarianism means that aid workers are fair and do not discriminate between persons in need on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political opinions, race or religion. Relief of the suffering must be guided solely by needs and priority and must be given to the most urgent people of distress.

Some writers argue that impartiality does not mean providing relief aid to everyone without any conditions what so ever. Referring to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1949 Geneva Convention which exclude those guilty of crimes from protection and differentiate clearly between combatants and non-combatants respectively, (Bryer and Cairns 1997: 364) noted that "… [there is] no obligation to provide relief for those who have been convicted by a proper judicial process of grave abuses of human rights, or who are likely to use that aid to commit atrocities". They note that in 1994 many agencies sought "to persuade Zaire and the 'international community' to separate the genuine Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire from the minority among them who were suspected of having participated in the genocide" (ibid). The call which was not heeded led to thousands of the affected refugees taken captive by the extremists until 1996 Tutsi rebel action. (Weiss and Collins 2000: 119) observed that field workers in recent years "have struggled with how to

[1] A failed state is used commonly to mean a state in which there is no effective state government and hence no sovereignty to breach (Zartman, 1994, in Fixdal anD Smith, 1998: 291)

[2] A collapsed state is defined as "a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have falling apart and must be reconstituted in some form, older or new" (Zartman (1996: 1).

separate combatants from non-combatants as they enter refugee camps. The Rwandan case reveals the complexity of humanitarian relief operations and shows the inapplicability of humanitarian principles in such complex situations.

2.3 HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND THE SOVEREIGNTY QUESTION

Apart from the three humanitarian principles discussed above, the United Nations seeks to provide humanitarian relief with full respect for the sovereignty of States. In relation to this the UN General Assembly noted that "The sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, humanitarian relief should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country." [3] This means that humanitarian assistance can only be given if the affected country gives its consent and have duly appealed for such assistance**.**

The issue of legitimate authority has to do with who has the right to use force in the internal affairs of another state and how this right can be justified. The question about right to intervene and how to justify it is a crucial issue facing humanitarian intervention "because a decision to intervene may contravene the sovereignty of a state (Fixdal and Smith, 1998: 291). Archibugi observed that much of the literature on this issue of sovereignty in the past decade has portrayed the situation "as if a large number of well-intentioned liberal states were willing to intervene to "save strangers" (Archibugi, 2004: 5). Fixdal and Smith argued however that where there is a cease-fire agreement and government agrees on UN peace keeping forces and where there is a so-called failed state, then the question of right authority to intervene is not important (op cit: 291)

[3] ibid

2.4 HUMANITARIASM AND THE WESTERN LIBERAL AGENDER

Rieff (2002) noted that many persistent advocates of humanitarianism, including former UN Secretary-general Kofi Annan, see humanitarian action as one of the 'pillars' supporting the new liberal world agenda which can be used to make up the vacuum created by globalisation's undermining of the idea of state sovereignty4: "what has gradually been emerging since 1945 is a parallel transition from a culture of sovereign impunity to a culture of national and international accountability" (Rieff 2002). This means that the rights of individuals are inalienable and cannot be abrogated by their communities or their governments. Contrary, Daniele Archibugi (2004: 3) observes that interventions are often carried out or supported by liberal Western states in Southern countries or in countries with much weaker political, economic, and military capabilities and argues that humanitarian interventions are now the "acts of power" of Western democracies in countries considered illiberal in a period where the western countries have an indisputable military, economic, political, and cultural hegemony over the southern states (ibid: 3).

The current work of NGOs has been linked to the challenge of peace. Smock (1997) in a summary of a symposium of humanitarian assistance and conflict in Africa observed that some NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance want to play expanded roles in promoting peace. Duffields (2002: 1049-1064) noted that the international community including NGOs and commercial companies have used aid to gained new forms of economic, social and political influence in the internal affairs of countries with insecurity and argues that "non-state organizations are not only learning to work with military establishments in new ways, aid practice itself has been redefined as a strategic tool of conflict resolution and social reconstruction"

[4] David Rieff is a journalist and a Visiting Professor at Bard College. The article was adapted from his book, A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crises, which was to be published by Simon & Schuster.

Humanitarian principles from the forgoing discussion therefore are profoundly difficult to apply in everyday practice of relief agencies. With the complexities of today's conflicts and natural disasters, Political neutrality is often ignored if not difficult to uphold. Various agencies therefore have different interpretations of the principles to fit the particular ideological or political stance of the organisation. Neutrality, impartiality and humanity in their real operational meaning are thus abandoned. Hence, the politics of humanitarian relief operation: Preaching one thing and practice the contrary (Smock 1997), (Duffield 2002).

2.5 VUNERABILITIES

Vulnerability is an important factor in the assessment of disasters as people are affected in varying degrees (Anderson and Woodrow 1989: 10-25)(Anderson and ; (Wisner 2001: 1). Vulnerability is used to explain why disasters occur and why some people from particular communities are affected and also to predict the possibility of future disaster (Anderson and Woodrow, 1989: 10-25). Wisner (2001: 1) identified several categories of vulnerabilities and at the core of these is the "potential for disruption or harm". Of particular relevance to this study is the category of social vulnerability. Social vulnerability is based on the observation that different group of people are affected in various degrees in the same disaster and also experience varying degrees of difficulty, success or failure, in the recovery process (Anderson and Woodrow, 1989: 10-25; Wisner, 2001: 3). Vulnerability is divided into social, economic, environmental, informational and so on and classify them into groups such as vulnerability of women, children, elderly people, the disabled, ethnic/racial/religious minorities, illegal immigrants and so on (Wisner, 2001: 3).

Situational vulnerability deals with the nature of the daily life of a group or a family which may have changed or may be changing (Wisner, 2001: 4). The approach is widely used in analysing household livelihood security(Sanderson 2000: 96-100) . A typical vulnerability inventory include: residents of group living facilities, elderly, particularly frail elderly, physically or mentally disabled, renters, poor households, women-headed households, ethnic minorities (by

language), recent residents/immigrants/migrants, large households, large concentration of children/youth, the homeless, and tourists and transients (Morrow, 1999: 10 in Wisner, ibid: 3).

2.6 DISASTER

Disaster denotes "situations where [a community] (…) is confronted with sudden unpredictable catastrophic changes over which it has little control" (Faulkner 2001: 136).(Prideaux et al. 2003: 478) described disasters as "unpredictable catastrophic change that can normally only be responded to after the event, either by deploying contingency plans already in place or through reactive response". This is the sense in which the word disaster is used in the paper.

2.7 INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION (IAC)

Inter-Agency Coordination is used differently to mean Cross-Sector Collaboration (CSC) and Inter-Organizational Collaboration (IOC) among others in most literature. Bryson et al (2006: 44) defines CSC in operational terms as "the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organisations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately". Kjellman et al (2003: 856) also defined coordination in the context of humanitarian assistance as "an attempt to bring together disparate agencies in a concerted and cost-effective manner in order to ensure that priorities are clearly defined, resources more efficiently utilised and duplication of efforts minimised"

Reindorp and Wiles, 2001: 5) defined aid coordination the systematic utilization of policy instruments to provide humanitarian relief in a cohesive and effective manner. The definition has three elements: Systematic use of policy instruments implies working through organized and established procedures rather than in an ad hoc manner; cohesion emphasises on bringing various elements of a response together; and its focus on planning, managing information, accountability, functional divisions of labour and sustaining

frameworks with political authorities. However they are often not present or if at all, are weak in UN humanitarian coordination (Reindorp and Wiles 2001: 5).

IAC is recognised as essential means to achieve effective relief operations. However, achieving effective coordination has often been a challenge to humanitarian agencies.Some authors argue that effective coordination of humanitarian relief operations is easier to advocate than to achieve among humanitarian agencies (Max 2005: 337-338); Minear, 2002: 19). This problem arises partly because organizations that are involved in humanitarian initiatives have different interests and goals which will present practical and organisational difficulties like "reaching agreements on institutional, administrative and operational dimensions" (Kjellman Et Al, 2003: 858). Minear (2002) argues that although there is positive progress in meeting the challenges of coordination, the lack of effective coordination structures such as competing power and authority, the desire for agency profile, the cost of achieving effective coordination, problems in devising appropriate structural arrangements, and a lack of leadership remains serious constraints (p.20-21).

Authors have identified several reasons that constrain effective IAC: (i) agencies rely on donations for their activities and for that matter there is competition among organisations including UNA for available resources (Max, 2005: 337; (Rey 2001: 105); (ii) Proper coordination requires the sharing of information by participating agencies, however, humanitarian organisations are always not willing to share information with other organisations pursuing the same goal because of agency profile. They always want to be seen as being first to provide help at a given situation. Being first to assist in emergencies usually attracts media attention and the media prominence will possibly attract new donors and increase their revenue (Max, op cit: 337-338; Minear 2002: 25-26)); (iii) humanitarian assistance often involves multiple organisations composed of different characters ranging from UNA and INGOs, through to the affected governments and indigenous NGOs are involved in the provision of humanitarian relief. The presence of hundreds of relief agencies create problems for IAC (Max, op cit: 338; Minear 2002: 29-31); and (iv) coordination involve costs and the resources invested in coordination affects the direct relief operations. For that matter participating organizations always compare the

coordination cost with the perceived benefit of being neutral (Max, op cit: 338; Minear 2002: 27-20).

Minear (2002: 22-23) noted that coordination is all about power and observed that coordination-by-command is more effective than the other two but acknowledged that it is subject to debate. He argues that "the persuasive of coordination vehicle is limited in the absence of authoritative institutional reinforcement" and recommend that UN Agencies should be given a clear authority to coordinate various players involved in relief operations and be held accountable for its achievement (ibid: 24). For effective emergency operations, central direction and coordination is needed to avoid duplication and conflict in operations (Deng and Minear 1992: 62). Similar to this view, Heath (1995: 13 in Ritchie, 2003: 677) noted that "in crisis and disaster response management, … time is too limited for consensus driven decision-making process that include all those involved" and suggest the need for fast leadership with the ability to make quick decisions. The need for strong leadership in coordination for effective response to disasters is also shared by other authors (Ritchie 2004: 677); Bryson et al, 2006; 47). Ritchie for instance noted that leadership is required to provide direction and guidance and argue that strategies alone will not be effective in responding to disasters unless they are combined with flexible or responsive organizational culture and have a strong leadership to control the implementation of the strategy (P. 677).

Max (2005:348) argues on the contrary that trust is necessary in achieving effective operational coordination and that various forms of interactions between organisations may lead to different forms of inter-organisational trust. He suggest that humanitarian organisations should rethink the task of coordination by developing organisational cultures that actively encourage improved inter-organisational trust and therefore more effective cooperation rather than lamenting the absence of top-down coordination.

The literature reviewed tends to suggest that IAC is the panacea to achieving effective humanitarian relief operation. It is poor coordination that result in unintended consequences of relief assistance. The issues that the literature fails to recognise are that coordination may be successful among

participating organisations to avoid duplication and maximise the use of resources but will not necessarily lead to greater outcomes for the affected people. The targeting and distribution of relief to the people who really needs the intervention is equally as important as coordination.

2.8 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adapted Bryson et al (2006) model for understanding CSC as the framework for analysing the IAC process during the 2007 floods in northern Ghana. They noted that the perceived need for inter-sector collaboration has provoked two broad response: a) that collaboration among organisations will only happen when they cannot achieve what they want without collaborating; and b) that there is the assumption that collaboration is the "Holy Grail of solutions and is the best thing to do. Hence, they developed a framework with five central dimensions for understanding CSC (ibid: 45).

The first dimension is based on the initial conditions that may influence the formation of CSC. They identified three elements as initial conditions which are likely to influence CSC: that general environment conditions triggers collaborations, the notion of sector failure as a precondition for collaboration and the antecedents of collaborative efforts. They propose that: a) CSCs will most likely form in turbulent environments and their sustainability are affected by the driving and constraining forces in the competitive and institutional environments, b) CSC are likely to form when the separate efforts of different institutions to address a situation have failed or are likely to fail, and cannot be fixed by the institutions acting alone, and c) that CSCs are more likely to succeed when there are linking mechanisms (powerful sponsors, general agreement on the problem, or existing networks) in place.

The second dimension is associated with the process aspects, such as forging initial agreements, building leadership, building legitimacy, building trust, managing conflict, and planning. These are the central purpose of collaboration which has to do with the composition and operating levels which include authority, procedures and the clarity of resources and deliberate planning. Bryson et al (ibid: 47-48) assert that: i) the form, content and

processes used to formulate initial agreements in collaborations affect the outcomes, ii) "cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when they combine deliberate and emergent planning", and ii) CSCs are more likely to succeed when their planning makes use of inputs of stakeholder to build trust and the capacity to manage conflict.

In the third dimension, the collaborative structure which includes elements such as goals, specialization of tasks and division of labour, rules and standard operating procedures, and designated authority relationships are dealt with. It explains the governance mechanisms and changing members and activities that affect the stability of collaborations and influence the strategy (Bryson et al ibid: 48 – 49). Under this dimension they argue that collaboration structure and the nature of the tasks that are performed at the client level are likely to influence the overall effectiveness of the collaboration and that "formal and informal governing mechanisms are likely to influence collaboration effectiveness".

Fourth dimensions relates to contingencies and constraints such as the type of collaboration, power imbalances among members, and competing institutional logics within the collaboration that affects the process, structure and governance. They claim that "collaborations involving system level planning activities are likely to involve the most negotiation, followed by collaborations focused on administrative-level partnerships and service delivery partnerships". Likewise, competing institutional logics within CSCs are likely to significantly influence the level at which agreement can be reached on the essential elements of the process, structure, governance, and desired outcomes of the collaboration.

Lastly, the fifth dimension involves the long-term aspects (outcomes) of CSC, such as public value; first-, second-, and third order effects; and resilience and reassessment and accountability. Their underlying propositions are that a) "CSCs are most likely to create public value when they build on individuals' and organisations' self-interests and each sector's characteristic strengths while finding ways to minimise, overcome, or compensate for each sector's

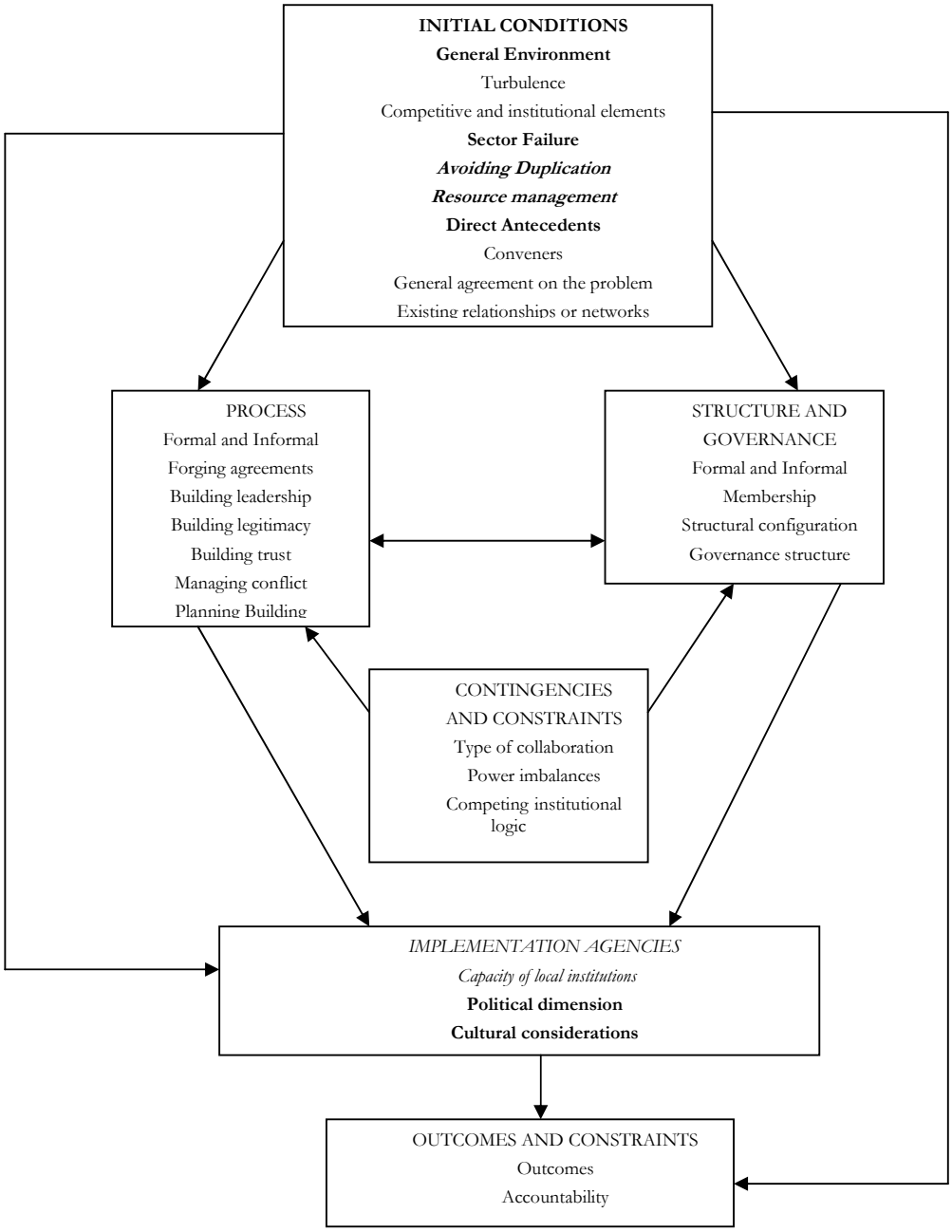
characteristic weaknesses"; and b) "CSCs are most likely to create public value when they produce positive first-, second-, and third-order effects".

Bryson et al (2006) then outline a number of conditions under each dimension which they argue when present are likely to make collaborations successful. Applying this model, this paper analyses the inter-agency coordination process to address the humanitarian crisis following the 2007 floods disaster in Ghana and discusses the effectiveness of this initiative. This model is particularly useful for the discussion because it provides propositions or claims that can be used to understand the success or otherwise of IAC.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion explained the key concepts used in this paper. It identified the desirability and constraints in inter-agency coordination and introduced the Bryson et al (2006) model for CSC to guide the discussion on the IAC during the 2007 floods disaster in Northern Ghana. The next chapter will put the response to the disaster in a context paying attention to the geographic position and the socio-economic context of the region that made the people vulnerable, the conditions that led to the disaster and the various coordination efforts that emerged in response to the crisis.

Figure 1 A modified Framework for Understanding Inter-Agency Coordination during Disasters



Source: adapted from Bryson et al (2006: 45). Author's modifications are indicated in italics

Chapter 3
THE CONTEXT OF THE FLOODS, RESPONSE AND COORDINATION EFFORTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Disasters are a common phenomenon in Ghana's history but are more often of minor intensity. However, the floods that occurred in the three Northern regions between July and September 2007 were of greater intensity. The effect of the floods was greater than the capacity of the government to respond effectively. In this chapter, a brief profile of Northern Ghana is presented to show the geographic and socio-economic setting of the people. This will help to provide a clear understanding of the vulnerability situation of the people in relation to natural disaster, effects of the floods and the response to the event focusing on the various coordination efforts.

3.2 THE CONTEXT: NORTHERN REGION

Ghana could be considered one of the disaster prone countries in the West Africa sub-region. This is evidenced by the occasional earthquakes/tremors, persistent droughts and bushfires, and outbreak of pests and diseases. It is also subject to internal conflicts and seasonal floods, which inflict extreme hardships on the population, particularly, northern Ghana of whom majority live in endemic poverty. The floods and conflicts in particular have further worsened the existing educational and health problems, inadequate infrastructure and poor housing facilities in the NR. These emergencies require substantial relief and rehabilitation assistance and the coordination of various agencies and organisations to deal with the situation.

Ghana is located in West Africa bordering the North Atlantic Ocean between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo. It occupies a total area of 238,540 square kilometres. The country is divided into ten administrative regions with an estimated population of over 21 million people (this figure is based on the

2005 estimates using the 2000 population census as a baseline). One of its administrative regions is the Northern Region which is the study area of this research[5].

The NR is the largest region in Ghana in terms of land area and occupies an area of about 70,383 square kilometres. It shares boundaries with the Upper East and the Upper West Regions to the north, the Brong Ahafo and the Volta Regions to the south, and two neighbouring countries, the Republic of Togo to the east, and La Cote d' Ivoire to the west. The land is mostly low lying except in the north-eastern corner with the Gambaga escarpment and along the western corridor. The region is drained by the Black and white Volta and their tributaries, Rivers Nasia, Daka, and others[6].

Agriculture is the predominant sector with over 90% of the productive age group being peasant farmers making a living out of the fields. Mechanized agriculture is possible on this terrain although limited in practice because of high cost. However, the peasant farmer even with his elementary tools, still produces the bulk of cereals, tubers and groundnuts in the region. The region has a comparative advantage in the production of cereals, cotton, legumes like groundnuts, tubers especially yam, and livestock. There are large arable farmlands, relatively uniform in vegetation cover. The generally flat land with undulating relief is suitable for both manual and mechanical cultivation. The region is ranked third in agricultural production coming after Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions. It is the largest producer of cotton and yam.

Nearly 68 per cent of the economically active population are classified as self-employed, while 22.9 per cent are unpaid family workers; only about 6.1 per cent are employed in the public and private sectors. The high level of unpaid family workers, recorded in some of the districts is probably a reflection of the high proportion of the population in the agricultural sector[7].

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[5] http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography; http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/general/. Accessed 21/10/2008
[6] http://www.nadmo.org/Northern%20Region.htm. Accessed 21/10/2008
[7] http://www.nadmo.org/Northern%20Region.htm. Accessed 21/10/2008

Poverty is high and widespread and many cannot afford the cost of basic services in health, education and social services such as good drinking water and electricity. While the general poverty levels in Ghana have fallen from a high of 50% in 1992 to 43% in 1999 there are sharp rises in the Central, Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions[8].

The socio-economic and geographic background of the region as noted in the foregoing paragraphs makes the majority of the people vulnerable to various forms of disasters especially natural disasters such as rainstorm, drought/crops failure, flooding, army worm infestation, and bush fires. When they occur, majority of the population who are mostly farmers suffer a great deal and the effect has ramifications on the entire population and exacerbates the already high poverty level in the region. Other disasters include ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts, boat accidents, epidemics (e.g. cholera), and Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis (CSM)[9].

3.3 THE EFFECTS OF 2007 FLOODS

The disaster was a combined effect of drought and flooding that had severe consequences (see Annex IV for combined effects of the disaster). Prior to the floods, there was a prolonged period of drought for about two months in the northern region (from about the 3rd of June to about the 15th of August 2007)[10]. The drought affected early crops that were planted and meant to stock household food stores to bridge the gap pending major food harvests in September and October. It also affected those who prepared their lands but had not yet planted the seeds. The failed early crops were pulled out to prepare farms for re-cropping with groundnut tops being used for livestock feeding[11]. It was estimated that a cropped area of 58,055 hectares was destroyed and this

[8] Ghana Living Standards Survey,1999
[9] Op cit, 7
[10] NADMO report on emergency face 2007 – Flood and drought disasters in the Northern Region
[11] Relief and livelihood restoration strategy for flood affected households in the northern region, (Karaga, Central Gonja & West Gonja Districts) Report by OICI

represented an estimated loss in potential crop production of about 130,200 metric tones[12]. The crops that were seriously affected included maize, cowpea, soybean, and groundnuts.

In late August and early September 2007, they rains came in torrents resulting in the unprecedented flooding of major rivers in the region particularly along the White Volta and the Oti Rivers and their tributaries and affected the nearby and low-lying communities. The flooding was largely caused by the combination of the heavy rains that occurred in the Upper East and West Regions and the East Mamprusi District area of the NR and the spillage of excess water from the Bagre reservoir in Burkina Faso. The floods further caused untold damage to crops that had previously survived the drought conditions and especially to re-cropped fields with tender plants becoming submerged in water. Communities along the fringes of the White Volta had their farmlands swept away as if the fields were cleared in readiness for either a playing field or an airport project. The loss of animals to the moving waters was equally severe. Consequently, the floods left in its wake human suffering, hunger, collapsed homes, human deaths, livestock washed away and a general state of hopelessness and despair[13].

The fieldwork identified three different coordination initiatives in response to the disaster: the Inter-Ministerial Task Force/Committee, Inter-NGOs Consortium and the UN System mode of sector coordination. These are described in more detail below.

3.4 INITIAL RESPONSE AND THE INTER-MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE

In reaction to reports on the flooding in the Upper East and Upper West Regions and the spilling of excess water from the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso,

[12] Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Northern Region, Presentation at a Stakeholder meeting in Tamale, 12th September 2007

[13] NADMO report on emergency face 2007 – Flood and drought disasters in the Northern Region

an evacuation message was sent by National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) and Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to all district assemblies in the catchment areas of the White River basin to alert all communities at low area to evacuate.

The Government of Ghana declared the three Northern Regions (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) a disaster zone on September 11, 2007 and committed an amount of five million Ghana cedis for immediate distribution of relief[14]. Subsequently, the President set up a high powered Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF) on disaster relief to organize and oversee immediate relief items distribution and the restoration of damaged infrastructure in the three NRs[15]. The committee was also tasked to co-ordinate all activities in a fair, transparent and accountable manner to bring comfort and assurance to the affected communities.

The President of Ghana made an appeal for the active involvement of all key stakeholder groups and communities in the making of decisions that affected them**.** A stakeholder is defined as any "group(s), individual or organisation(s) that can affect or are affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives" (Feeman, 1984: 46). The involvement of key internal and external stakeholders is crucial for the planning and management of crisis and disasters (Ritchie, 2003: 678). The government noted that Information and decisions should be sent through the Regions to the Districts, so that work will be done effectively and efficiently. The chair of the Taskforce was the advisor to the President. Membership of the committee included the Ministers of Interior, Defence, National Security, Information and National Orientation, Finance, Local Government, Water Resources, Works and Housing, Transport, Health and Agriculture[16]. This was essentially a top-down approach to managing the crisis.

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[14] Ghana News Agency Reports September 11 and September 14 2007

[15] ibid

[16] Ibid

While the setting up of the committee showed government commitment in tackling the disaster, the move was seen by others as a strategy by government to highjack the response programme. The concerns were that the task of the IMTF duplicated the core functions and mission of the NADMO. NADMO mission is "to manage disasters by co-ordinating the resources of Government institutions and developing the capacity of voluntary community-based organisations to respond to similar emergencies[17]". Since NADMO is mandated by law to respond to such emergencies, one would have thought that government should have strengthened the capacity of NADMO which is under-resourced. The problem underlying many official disaster management organizations is that they "remain seriously under-resourced, with little political or legislative support and almost no funds".(Sanderson 2000: 96)

With its legislative mandate, a political and resource support such as the support that was given the committee would have empowered NADMO to respond and coordinate the disaster activities effectively. The question here was who had the mandate to coordinate the response? The action of the government exemplify the observation of Andrew Maskrey (1997) when he concluded that "...even when national disaster management systems have been formally created, good coordination between different government and other organizations does not necessarily exist, leading to confusion, contradictions, overlapping functions and gaps in responsibility" (Maskrey, 1997 in Sanderson**,** 2000: 96). The capacity of NADMO could have been strengthened using the resources that were available to the inter-ministerial committee. The expenditure of the activities of the IMTF was of concern to majority of the respondents. About 78% (11 out 14) of the respondents were of the view that a large portion of the resources was used in transportation and meetings. That money could have been used to resource NADMO at a time that it was almost handicapped in both logistics and financial resources.

In response to government declaration of the disaster and request for assistance, NADMO, donor agencies, UNA, INGO, LNGOs and government

[17] ibid

institutions began to respond in some measures. In order to determine the extent of damage and to provide relief to victims of the affected communities, the government initiated a Joint Assessment Team (JAT) that comprised the international partners and other key stakeholders: the Government, the UN System, NGOs, Ghana Private Sector, Religious bodies and the Media.[18]. The JAT was divided into five groups so as to be able cover the vast Northern Region and save time. The assessment of group one and two was by air in 2 X puman Helicopter with nine passengers in each and group three to six were by road using 4 X 4 vehicles. According to(Louise K. C. and Kapucu 2006: 311-312) it was noted that effective mobilization of response to disasters on a large scale needs rapid search and exchange of valid information regarding the sudden, damaging events across the network of organisations, disciplinary, and jurisdictional boundaries. It was hope that the joint assessment will produce a comprehensive updated view of the disaster.

3.5 INTER-NGOs CONSORTIUM AND COORDINATION

Before the intervention of the government's Task Force and the UN System, there existed an NGO coordination mechanism called the Inter-NGOs Consortium (INGOC). The INGOC is an informal consortium that was formed by NGOs in northern Ghana to coordinate humanitarian aid efforts during the 1994-5 Konkomba-Nanumba conflict in the NR (Van Linde and Naylor 1999: 8). It is the umbrella organization of all NGOs, both local and international operating in the areas of emergency relief and rehabilitation in Ghana. Through the consortium, the NGOs organized refugee camps, distributed food items and also provided other basic necessities of life (Ibid). The consortium was revitalised during the drought period that preceded the floods. The consortium's first focus was on how to address the impact caused by the drought from late May to mid-July. The NGOs met to discuss how they

[18] NADMO report on emergency face 2007 – Flood and drought disasters in the

could supply farmers whose crops were destroyed and uprooted with seeds for replanting. The meeting was also to discuss the issue of floods because the anticipated rain could come in torrents. The Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS) is currently hosting the Secretariat of the INGOC for Relief and Rehabilitation[19].

The sudden onset of the floods shifted the focus of consortium. The consortium in collaboration with NADMO was brainstorming on how to address the floods devastation. The essence of this collaboration was to share information, but also to serve as the central point of coordination and to avoid duplication and ensure effective and efficient utilization of resources to achieve synergy for the affected communities. Humanitarian response to disaster requires enormous resources to be able to address the needs of the affected.

The mechanism for coordination was developed by NGOs forming the consortium. Its work did not follow the UN or donor coordination framework which is often used in relief operations as observed by (Borton 1995: 29) in reference to NGO consortia in Ethiopia. All the NGOs operating in northern Ghana was to make contributions of any kind to the consortium for the procurement of relief items and for distributions to the affected people (interview with respondent 8, July 23, 2008). This was aimed at ensuring that there was increased access to available resources by participating organisations, the sharing of the costs involved in providing the relief assistance and also to ensure that there was proper coordination in the relief operations. In this regard that addressing humanitarian situations in extreme disasters such as floods, conflicts, earthquakes and so on "require resources and skills from various organisations than those in the immediately affected area"(Louise K. C. and Kapucu 2006: 309).

Northern Region

[19] See under emergency relief and reconstruction on AGREDS website: www.agreds.org/emergency

A three-member assessment team comprising representatives from Rural Media Network (RUMNET), NADMO and Ghana Red Cross society (GRCS) on August 27, 2007 was appointed by the consortium to conduct a rapid assessment on the floods. Minear et al (1992: 3) have noted that coordination at the operational level requires needs assessment, policy formulation, advocacy, funding acquisition, security assessment and facilitation. Thus, the consortium decision to carry out the assessment was in line with Minear et al and was meant to ensure that all the various organisations involved gain access to and operate with the same data regarding the floods. This was to ensure that all actors had access to and operated with the same data (Overland 2005: 134).

This was essential because different organisations had different data regarding the effects of the floods. There were widespread variations in the data of the disaster casualties. No initial agreement was reached on figure and this was true also with the politicians. According to the Heritage[20], there was still uncertainty as to the number of casualties and property destroyed by the floods two months into the disaster. Under a banner headline, "Two Ministers Battles Over Flood Victims" the paper indicated that one minister maintained that the number of deaths was fifty six, number of houses destroyed were seventy thousand and about two hundred and sixty thousand displaced, while the minister put the number of displaced persons at three hundred and thirty-three thousand and destroyed houses at thirty-fore thousand, three hundred and thirty-six. Such conflicting reports were dangerous for planning by the participating organizations and could result in under estimation or over estimation of relief items.

Van der Linde, and Naylor (1999: 9) concluded that the informal and flexible nature of the INGOC in Northern Ghana has many advantages that can build upon the capacities it generated in the response during the ethnic conflict to take on other roles. A good example of this is the "advantages that can be gained by networking with other specialised NGOs in the continent to share skills and build learning and capacities" (Ibid: 9) to respond to future

emergencies. The consortium therefore should "retain the flexible character, build its capacity by devising emergency-preparedness plans, incorporating more gender planning, improving coordination, fostering linkages with international donors, and strengthening relations with local and national government to improve collaboration on information-sharing…" (Ibid: 10).

The consortium has no formal leadership structure and operated in an ad hoc manner relying on contributions from member NGOs. Individual members were tasked to perform certain duties. Red Cross was responsible for furnishing the consortium with assessment reports, World Food Programme (WFP) was charged to get figures of beneficiaries for long-term support and also distributing high energy biscuits to the vulnerable, Ghana Network for Peace Building (GHANEP) was responsible for monitoring and fundraising, the Association of Church Development Projects **(**ACDEP) was specifically responsible for fundraising, CARE International was charged with developing a proposal on food security, Wold Health Organisation (WHO) was responsible for strengthening integrated disease surveillance and support, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was to submit a project idea note for emergency relief, and the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) was responsible for relief and reconstruction.

Initially, the consortium met regularly to update members on the status of the disaster and share information on the activities of other members, regarding operations and what was still needed to be done. Proper coordination requires the sharing of information by participating agencies (Max 2005: 337-338). However in spite of the good intention and initiative of the consortium, its meetings subsequently became very irregular and ineffective. Individual NGOs who had their own money and items were reluctant to contribute funds or relief items to the consortium. Only three organisations: AGREDS, World Vision (WV) and Action Aid made contributions to the consortium. Many organisations including the UNAs went out of the NGO

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[20] The Heritage is a local news paper in Ghana

consortium and had their own programs. As noted by a member of the consortium, "this dimension broke the front of the consortium and strengthened government's front" (interview. respondent 8, July 23, 2008).

3.6 SECTOR/JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

Generally, fieldwork showed that sector coordination was formed following the government declaration of the State of Emergency (SoE) of the three Northern Regions. Following announcement and the appeal by government for assistance, the UNAs, the global donor community and NGOs responded positively[21]. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) came in to assess the situation. The assessment was to find out the systems that were in place for providing relief and how those structures were coordinating with each other to ensure that relief items gets to the people who were really in need. It was noticed from this assessment that, the various organisations including the UNAs, INGOs, LNGOs and government institutions were carrying out their own activities without any proper coordination and also the figures that were being used by the various organizations were inconsistent and varied from one organization to another. The assessment committee recommended that organisations should work in sector groups so that organisations involved in a particular response sector will coordinate the activities in that sector (interview with respondent 5, August 6, 2008).

NADMO in collaboration with the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) on September 24, 2007 instituted the Northern Region Coordination Forum (NRCF) under the chairmanship of the Northern Regional Minister for participating agencies and organizations in order to ensure an effective coordinated approach to the relief operations. Agencies/Organizations that formed part of this forum included among others: United Nations Children

Fund (UNICEF), WHO, WFP, UNDAC, Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU), RCC, CARE International, Ghana Army, Ghana Police, Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS), Action Aid, CRS, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ghana Health Service (GHS), OXFAM, WV, AGREDS, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), and GRCS. Modalities for collection of data from the flood affected areas based on household representation, distribution of relief and receiving cash or in kind donation was laid out by NADMO[22].

During the meeting sub-sectors were formed in areas such as food security, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, infrastructure, education and shelter/logistics/transport to be responsible for the planning and execution of specific processes of providing relief that fall within their sectors. Each sector was led by a chairperson. The logistics and coordination forum was co-chaired by WFP and NADMO[23]. All participating organisations were required to specify their intervention and areas of operations to avoid concentration of activities in one locality. WFP also provided food relief to organisations that were into food distribution (interview, respondent 9, August 4, 2008 and 10, August 5, 2008). UNICEF was responsible for nutrition with WFP/ Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), WHO responsible for health issues with UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), food security for WFP/FAO, water, sanitation and hygiene (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was responsible for coordination and information management, WFP was in charge of logistics and sustainable livelihoods for UNDP and FAO. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was in charge of non-food items and shelter.

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[21] NADMO report on emergency phase 2007 – Flood and drought disasters in the Northern Region
[22] Report on emergency face 2007 – Flood and drought disasters in the Northern Region
[23] Ibid

Overland (2005: 134-135) has observed that during field operations, one person from the UN System will normally assume leadership in several important coordination functions providing focus for the coordination across board. However, in many situations they are mostly willing to accept the "appointment of a primus inter pares 'lead agency'. This lead agency is typically a UN agency that takes on coordination responsibilities within its field of competence, during a limited period of time and in one location only". It was decided that UN sector agencies, NGOs and other organisations should notify NADMO about the areas they are operating, what they do, and what needs to be done in order to avoid duplication rather than giving the relief items to NADMO. Thus, NADMO was the central organisation coordinating information sharing of the actors.

There were also the regional coordination meetings that were supposed to be chaired by the regional minister. These meetings were meant to bring together all the sectors in order to brief the minister on what they were doing, where they stand, what their plans were and all activities relating to the relief operations. These meetings however could only happen about twice and nothing was done in this regard until in early July 2008 when the government received information from Burkina Faso that they were going to open their dams. The RCC acting on this information then called all actors again including NGOs, NADMO's Regional and District Coordinators, and other actors to present their plans and strategies on disaster preparedness and response (interview, respondent 5, August 6, 2008). The report on emergency phase by NADMO indicated that attendance to the NRCF was affected because of emerging problems in the sub-sector committees due to demands for incentives at their meetings. The figure below shows the coordination structure generated from the findings.

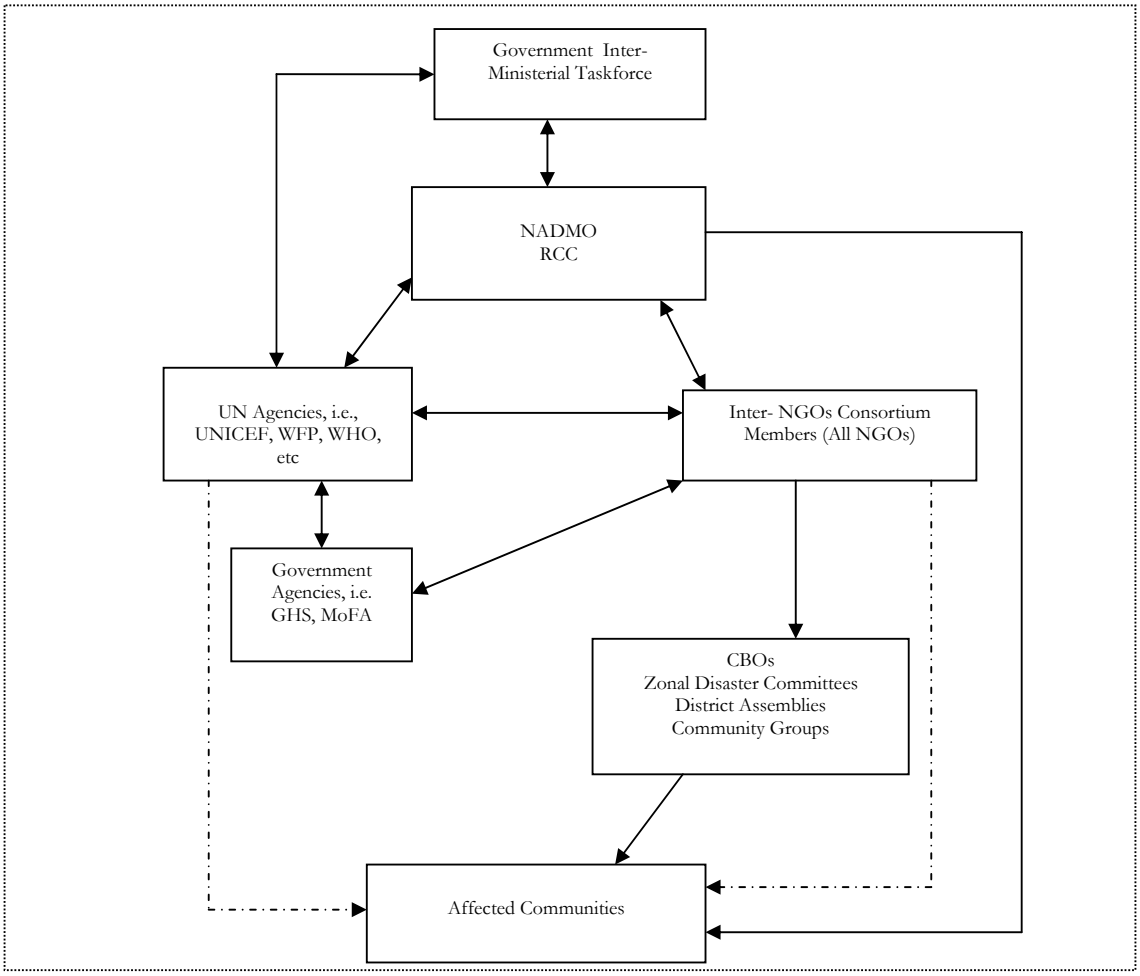
The nature of the inter-agency coordination of relief operation the 2007 floods in Northern Ghana is depicted in figure 2 below and also shows the relationship between the INGOs and local organisations. At the apex of the structure is the IMTF with the government muscle over the coordination process. It has direct relationship with NADMO and RCC who work together as the arm of the government coordination centre. It also has a relationship

with the UNAs in the process. The INGOC represents the umbrella of all the NGOs. The UNAs have formal relations with the government institutions through which they implement government programmes. The Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are partner organisations who implement the programmes of the NGOs at the district and community level. The zonal disaster committees are formed by NADMO and through them and the District Assemblies, some of these NGOs work with the disaster victims. The Communities Groups are formed by the NGOs to implement their interventions. These organisations/groups were not part of the coordination process, but were the implementing agencies at the community level with NADMO.

The next chapter discusses and analyses the coordination process using the framework proposed by Bryson et al (2006).

Figure 2: The coordination structure of the 2007 relief operations in Northern Ghana

Source: Derived from Survey Data



Chapter 4
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings from interviews with the various actors presented in the preceding chapter by applying the framework proposed by Bryson et al (2006:45) for categorising the literature on cross-sector collaboration under; a) formations of IAC or precipitating conditions; b) how collaborations work in practice (process components); c) trust, leadership and legitimacy or structure and governance issues; d) driving and competitive forces (contingencies and constraints); and e) outcomes. Under each of the above themes, the authors outlines some prepositions which they argue when present are likely to make inter-agency coordination successful. Respondents in the interviews were asked questions around these themes. A discussion and analysis of findings from the interviews follows.

4.2 THE FORMATION OF COORDINATION

The first dimension of Bryson et al (2006) model is based on the initial conditions that led to the formation of CSCs. According to them, this has to do with the general environment that triggers collaborations and attribute this to a turbulent environment or sector failure. They assert that, a) CSCs are more likely to form in turbulent environments and b) different actors are likely to try CSC if they believe that individual efforts will fail or is likely to fail. Interviewees were asked about their agencies involvement in humanitarian relief operations and what if any were their motivation for working with other agencies in the 2007 flood disaster. Evidence from this research confirmed that these two factors were present in varying degrees.

4.2.1 TURBULENCES

Information gathered from respondents indicated that the inter-agency coordination was formed as a result of an interruption of the regular pattern of human activities (floods) that threatened human survival. The post-floods situation was further aggravated by the drought that preceded the floods, leading to a situation that requires response from multiple agencies. The drought which affected large farms across the region had exacerbated the already high poverty level of the people and posed bigger challenges to the development initiative of the government, NGOs and international agencies alike. These challenges drove the NGO operating in the region to start thinking of how they could help the farmers and plan for the possibility of flooding in case the rain came in torrents. These circumstances necessitated the inter-agency coordination particularly, the formation of the INGOC. In their study of non-profits involvement in cross-sector collaborative efforts for post-Katrina and Rita relief, recovery and rebuilding, (Simo and Bies 2007: 130) also indicated that CSCs emerged within turbulent environment in all the three areas of their study. The finding therefore indicates that the turbulent environment was one the driving force for the formation of inter-agency coordination.

Further, there was evidence of other initiatives that propelled the formation of the IAC, an initial condition which Bryson et al (ibid 46) referred to as "the driving and constraining forces in the competitive and institutional environments". There was general agreement among respondents from the NGOs that when the disaster occurred, some members of the NGOs took the initiative (drivers and sponsors) to immediately convene meetings and send out letters requesting other NGOs to contribute to the INGOC fund which was used to provide short-term household relief activities. Also, the UN and other Agencies that are central actors in international relief operations such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), WFP, UNICEF, and WHO were mentioned as key drivers that propelled the formation of the inter-agency coordination, comprising all the major NGOs, government

departments such as GHS and MoFA and NADMO. As aptly stated by one NGO respondent:

> *… they sent letters to all of us to come together but most of the letters were requesting us to make contributions to a fund which was to be used for the distribution. But you know, NGOs funds are restricted and you cannot use the funds to do other things ratter than the projects for which the fund is asked. So we saw it as not an effective consortium for us to go into. Meetings were held to bring us together. The first meeting my Programme Manager was billed to go but he didn't, the second meeting I was delegated to go but it was called off. So, invariably members of the consortium had to leave and joined the new group that was formed by the UN agencies as a result of the government declaration … (survey data, interview with respondent 10).*

The above statement emphasize that driving forces can propel the formation of IAC in emergency situation but the driving force must have the resource power where members can draw on. Overall, the government declaration and the setting up of the Task Force heralded the broader coordination spearheaded by the UNAs.

4.2.2 INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE

The perception of institutional failure was also cited as one of the reasons for the IAC initiative. Bryson et al (2006: 46) asserted that organisations are "most likely to try CSC when they believe the separate efforts of different actors to address a problem have failed or are likely to fail, and the actual or potential failures cannot be fixed by the organisations acting alone". The notion of government and NADMO's failure was widespread during the field work. When the government declared the three Northern Regions as a disaster zone it indicated that government a lone could not handle the situation and called for global support. Generally, respondents noted that the government was not able to provide accurate information on the affected people at the district level and NADMO was not adequately resourced to deal with the situation. In most of the districts that were affected, the district officers did not have data on the effects of the disaster. The perception of sector failure was one of the driving

factors in the formation of the sector –wide coordination initiative described in chapter three. The general perception of sector failure by respondents particularly with respect to information sharing is captured in a remark by an NGO field operations officer:

> *if you are looking for information on the disaster, don't go to the district assemblies. They don't have the data. When we were going to assist the affected people in … district, we went to the district assembly for data on the affected people and they had no information even though the district was listed as one of the most affect areas. How can the district administration fail to have such important information on their people? (Interview with respondent 6, July 15, 2008).*

4.2.3 DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS

In addition, the need to avoid duplication emerged from this research as one of the initial conditions that drove the formation of the IAC. All the respondents were of the view that they came together in order to avoid duplication and make judicious use of the available resources. One of the interviewees explained that the essence of the INGOC was to avoid duplication and ensure effective service delivery, but because some NGOs wanted credit for themselves they stayed out of the consortium's activities and were operating differently until the UN System intervened with the SSC mechanism to harmonised the activities of all the actors so as to avoid duplication. Generally, all the respondents echoed the same view and this is captured in a statement made by interviewee in response to a question about what led to the formation of IAC:

> *Although we realised that no single organisation could handle the disaster response, but each organisation was having their own programmes and doing what they like. So when NU System came and assessed the situation they realised that there was no coordination at all among the actors so they recommended the SSC where each sector was to coordinate the activities of actors operating within that sector. (interview with respondent 8, July 23, 2008).*

The respondents noted that in the sector committee meetings they shared information on operations so that others will not do the same things and all

this information was sent to the wider forum at the RCC meetings so that other committees will share with the information. This was meant to avoid duplication. A respondent noted that: WFP required all participating NGOs to submit proposals with list of beneficiaries and districts. The proposals were crosschecked to ensure that they don't duplicate (interview with respondent 7, July 17, 2008). All these views shows a strong indication that duplication and resource management were key factors that influenced the formation of the IAC, factors which Bryson et al (2006) did not highlight. This prompted the researcher to modify the framework to include duplication and resource management The finding justifies Kjellman et al (2003: 858) definition of IAC as noted in chapter 2.

4.2.4 ANTECEDENTS OF COLLABORATIIVE EFFORTS

Bryson et al (2006: 46) associated the success of CSC with the existing or powerful linking mechanism and noted that "CSCs are more likely to succeed when one or more linking mechanisms, such as powerful sponsors, general agreement on the problem, or existing networks, are in place at the time of their initial formation".There was evidence during the study to support this assertion. During the interviews with the respondents, it was revealed that existing relationship, agreements and powerful driving mechanisms were important elements for the formation of the coordination. Speaking on how their organization got involved in the coordination process, a respondent explained that:

> *during the drought period, we conducted a vulnerability assessment and discussed the situation with USAID who were also interested in the study. USAID then convened a meeting which involved our organisation, MoFA and USAID. But before then, USAID had a programme with MoFA on the drought issue and our organisation was brought in so that we will share the results of the vulnerabilities studies we conducted concerning the drought with MoFA. Just around this time, the floods set in and an expanded meeting was called involving WFP, CARE, CRS, OICI, MoFA, GHS, and other organisations to deliberate on the situation and the possible response. They told us that there was a fund for programmes that needed*

> *money to provide relief for their target people which most of the NGOs accessed for their programmes. International specialists on floods and other disasters were brought in and upon analyzing the data available they recommended a joint assessment that will produce a unique data for all organisations. So WFP was commission as the global emergency relief body to coordinate all the other organisations* (interview with respondent 10, August 5, 2008).

The explanation of the respondent captures Bryson et al (2006:46) proposition and affirms Deng and Minear (1992: 62) claim that effective emergency operations needs a central direction and coordination to avoid duplication and conflict in operations.

4.3 PROCESS OF COORDINATION

The second dimension in the framework is associated with process aspects of collaboration such as forging initial agreements, building leadership, building legitimacy and trust among actors- the intangible aspects of relationships that is so important in reaching a common understanding of a problem or achieving a shared objective. The authors aptly put it that: a) the form, content and process used to formulate initial agreements in collaborations affect their outcomes, b) CSCs are likely to succeed when they combine deliberate planning (as in mandated collaborations) and emergent planning (used in non-mandated collaborations), and c) collaborations are more likely to succeed when their planning takes into account the inputs of stakeholders and builds on the distinctive competencies of collaborators. During the field work, respondents were asked whether their agencies worked alone or with others during the disaster and if they worked with others, how they achieve that collaboration. Findings from the study indicated the availability of these conditions across the various responses.

There was evidence that the coordination was more successful among organisations that had formal agreement than those with informal agreements. For example, it was found out that the coordination within the INGOC which was based on informal agreement among NGOs was less successful than the coordination of the sector groups led by the UNAs. The work of these UNAs

is based on formal agreement between them and the government or the organisations they work in partnership with. A respondent from a NGO stated that:

> *the first meeting that we organised as a consortium attracted more than 20 organisations, but the subsequent ones only very few attended. Many of NGOs came with the expectation that the consortium was going to provide them with funds to get involved in the response, but when they realised that we wanted them to pull resources and share information so that we could achieve better outcomes, they began to withdraw from the meetings and were doing their own things. The consortium has no systematised rules and responsibilities and this has disorganized it* (interview respondent 8, July 23, 2008).

The implication in this statement is that, because there was no formal agreement or rules, members were not bound by the consortium's decisions and as such abandoned its activities to pursue their own courses of action. However, coordination involving the UN System proved more successful. The UNAs work in partnership with government departments to implement government programmes. As such there are formal rules and MoU between the agencies and these institutions. Institutions such as MoFA and GHS were strategic link between the agencies and the NGOs in areas of food security and health related issues. Where appropriate, (MoU) in operations were entered into between the agencies and the NGOs in terms of resource commitment and food distribution. For instance a MoU between WFP and the NGOs required the NGOs to provide food to people who had received seeds so that they could preserve the seeds. The WFP was to provide the NGOs with food aid while MoFA provided them with the seeds (interview, respondent 9, August 4, 2008). The finding expressed the importance of agreements to the success of IAC. Where there are formal agreements and systematic rules, coordination is more successful than in cases where there are no such rules and agreements.

Conflict has been identified as one of the key constraints to the IAC. Bryson et al noted that partners encounter conflict in collaboration in terms of different aims and expectations, strategies and tactics. They assert that CSCs

are more likely to succeed when partners are able to reduce power imbalances and effectively manage conflict (2006: 48).

The findings from this research demonstrated that partners to the coordination had different expectations and aims that they wanted to pursue from the overall expectation and aims of the consortium. For example, the INGOC wanted members to contribute to a fund that will be used to provide relief to the affected but some member NGOs felt that their funds were restricted and such a move was going to restrict the expansion of their profiles. This conflict in resources led to the withdrawal of some members and hence the consortium's failure to achieve meaningful coordination. There was also a perceived conflict between the NGOs and the government as poignantly pointed out by a respondent:

> *the essence of the consortium was to avoid duplication and ensure effective service delivery. But it happened that some NGOs wanted credit for their organisations and so they broke ranks with the consortium. They broke the front of the consortium and hence strengthened government's front. But I must commend the UNDP country director. They [government] even wanted to take out all NGOs completely from the whole coordination. They had a meeting, and not even one NGO was involved in the Arial assessment. But later after the meeting they said the NGOs could be part (interview with respondent 8, July 23, 2008).*

It emerged from respondents that the strategic intervention of UNDP in resolving the conflict was a key factor in the success of the sector-based coordination. This could be attributed to the agency's resource power (powerful sponsor) and ability to involve other actors (effective champion) thus providing leadership in both formal and informal ways. In terms of expectations, a respondent from an INGO indicated that "for expectations, sometimes, you identify an organisation with a shared vision, but you start working with the organisation only to realise that they don't play all the cards on the table. They try to use some other channels to achieve other objectives" (interview with respondent 7, July 17, 2008).

4.4 COORDINATION STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The third dimension deals with governance (set of coordinating and monitoring) mechanisms and how changing members and activities affect the stability of collaborations and influence the strategy, process and outcomes. According to Bryson et al (2006: 49) coordination is more likely to be effective where there is a centralised/lead organization. Effectiveness is used to mean "achievement of desired outcomes from the client's perspective" The field work found that the IAC was based on sector networks where coordination tasks were divided into sub-sectors such as food security, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, infrastructure, education, and shelter, logistics, supply and transport. While each of these sub-sectors had a lead agency and a chairperson with other organisations joining the sectors depending on their mandate/area of operation, the government INTF through NADMO acted as the central coordinating mechanism providing legitimacy to the whole operations24. Information gathered during the interviews also established that the sector-coordination worked more effectively in avoiding duplication than the INGOC?

When interviewees were asked about their role in the relief they, respondents noted that their geographical areas of operation were decided by NADMO and the WFP and the specific tasks performed by each organisation was cross-checked and approved by the lead agencies to ensure there were no duplication. There was therefore a hierarchical relationship among the various participants in the coordination process. This aspect of accountability seems to have contributed to the apparent success of the sector-based coordination over other types as discussed in chapter 3.

Bryson et al (2006: 49) note that collaboration structure and the nature of the task performed at the client level are likely to influence its overall

[24] NADMO report on emergency face 2007 – Flood and drought disasters in the Northern Region

effectiveness. While there were self-governing structures, there was also a lead agency or agencies that provided overall direction and control. Respondents noted that there were regular sub-sector coordination meetings where they share information on their operations and discussed modalities of the interventions. Major decisions were made by the lead agency who finally decides where a particular organisation should work. All the sub-sector groups according to the respondents, were required to attend weekly meetings (NRCF) chaired by the WFP/NADMO to discuss and share information on their operations.

4.5 CONTINGENCIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Contingencies and constraints relate to the type of collaboration, power imbalances among members, and competing institutional logics within the collaboration that affects the process, structure and governance. Bryson et al (2006: 50) assert that "collaborations involving system-level planning activities are likely to involve the most negotiations, followed by collaborations focused on administrative-level partnerships and service delivery partnerships". There were contingency plans in place which made the coordination respond easily to the disaster especially, with the sector-coordination led by the UN System. The study revealed that there is what is called the Humanitarian Response Depot (HRD) which contains everything that people need to support themselves when they are in shock. From which they immediately relied on for food aid as the first point of emergency relief (interview, respondent 5, August 6, 2008). The study however revealed that there were no such contingency plans in the INGOC coordination process to easily respond to the victims needs.

In terms of constraints, respondents noted that the initial challenge was how to obtain accurate statistics of the affected people and the communities. Different figures were quoted by organisations and other sources which made it difficult to determine the relief package. As one respondent put it "there were different figures from various sources and when our regional bureau needed the statistics to determine the quantity of required, we could not readily give the figures because we didn't want to quote a different figure from what

government had officially announced. This affected the immediate response to send cereals and other forms of commodities" (interview, respondent 5, 6 August 2008). Logistics constraints were also cited as having affected the coordination effort at getting the relief to the people. Respondents noted that, NADMO did not have logistics to move relief items to the communities and that resulted in relief being locked up in the districts. An NGO responded remarked that NADMO's lack of logistics strengthened the NGOs argument to deliver the relief by themselves rather than sending it to NADMO as was directed by the government. Interviewees also expressed the lack of experience, skills and standards used in relief operations as challenges that confronted the coordination. They explained that providing relief to disaster victims require trained personnel for the acquisition of relief items, storage, handling and distribution which was lacking in most participating organisations particularly, NADMO. However, staff training was not incorporated into the coordination process. This process resulted in poor handling and distribution. There general view expressed by the respondents indicated that identifying the most affected from the chronically poor major constraint to the operators. A respondent narrated a story where a poor woman a certain community cried for relief explaining that she was not around when they wrote the names of the affected. This finding explains the lack of proper targeting. Is relief for the poor or for the victims of the disaster?

4.6 MUTED OUTCOMES

According to Bryson et al (2006), outcomes of cross-sector collaboration are about public value; first-, second-, and third order effects, resilience, reassessment and accountability. In the context of this research outcomes are conceived in terms of a) strengthening capacity of local organisations and b) benefits to disaster victims (whether or not victims receive support and whether support reached intended beneficiaries/target groups).

Bryson et al (Ibid: 51) claim that "cross-sector collaborations are most likely to create public value when they build on individuals' and organizations' self-interests and each sector's characteristic strengths while finding ways to

minimize, overcome, or compensate for each sector's characteristic weaknesses". In terms of benefits of the collaboration in capacity building of partner organisation at the community level, respondents noted that the coordination did not include that in the programme. This assertion was further confirmed in the report of emergency face[25]. However, the study revealed that two of the INGOs offered training to community groups and partner organisations to enhance their capacities in the relief operations. For instance, in organization D, a respondent noted that they work with partner organizations that share their vision at the district level. "We assessed partners on their strengths and weaknesses and provide training to build their capacities" (interview, respondent 7, July 17, 2008).

The interviewee (ibid) explained that training was conducted on October 1-2, 2007, to equip participants with expertise in food distribution issues. A total number of thirty people were drawn from NADMO and partner organizations. The participants were trained on the principles and methodologies in humanitarian operation by experts in the areas of: humanitarian Charter and Code of Conduct, Good Enough Guide, Sphere common standards and minimum standards on food security/food distribution, Practical modalities in food warehousing and distribution, registration of affected people, common understanding and forms (information on ration/claims process and community roles and responsibilities), and warehousing and distribution forms. There was a practical field registration exercise organized for all the participants to put theory to practice.

Respondents in organization A explained that they have field officers working in all the district the organization operates. At the community level, they form community groups comprising between 25 and 30 members with executives. The organization's activities revolve around the community groups. The field officers work with the community people through the groups. Members are basically household heads or people who can act as household

[25] ibid

heads. To implement any intervention, the organization sensitises the whole community, build the capacity of the community group and pass the intervention to them to propagate. "During the disaster, the community groups identified storage facilities, identified the affected people, and mobilized the people and assist in distribution. Basically, the groups are the owners of interventions in their communities" (interview, respondent 10, August 5, 2008).

Bryson et al (2006: 51) also argue that "cross-sector collaborations are most likely to create public value when they produce positive first-, second-, and third-order effects". Respondents were asked questions about the immediate benefits to disaster victims, whether victims receive support in time and whether the items reach intended beneficiaries. The study showed that relief did not get to the people in time and in the right quantities. Most of the respondent (9 respondents) noted that the coordination delayed the intervention and affected the timely delivery of relief. One of the respondents remarked that:

> *what I hold now is the telling effect of the relief. WFP promised to provide food aid for us to distribute to the farmers so we made preparations for a lot of food aid. There was a memorandum of understanding that provided a conditionality that food aid should be given to people who are provided with seeds. This condition was good because it was thought that the farmers will preserve the seeds if they have the food. MoFA was responsible for seeds whiles WFP was to provide the food aid. MoFA did not have the seeds to provide for distribution and you could only get the food aid from WFP if only you had the seeds. This delayed the intervention (interview, respondent 9, august 4, 2008).*

He explained that because their organisation was already into assisting farmers, they had already provided some farmers with seeds so they went to WFP with that data for the food to distribute to those farmers. The question here is whether those farmers who received the food aid were the real needy or the intended beneficiary? These farmers were not necessarily the affected people although they were living in the affected district. The seeds that the organization supplied to them were part of their on-going development

intervention and were not part of the relief programme. Beneficiaries of seed were not necessarily affected and needy people. The food aid was therefore given to them based on the condition set by WFP and as such people who were really affected were not those who received the food aid. This situation is in line with Minear (2002: 23) who remarked that the same donors who criticise the lack of coordination also "complicate the task of achieving it by imposing conditions, earmarking resources, and injecting political and other agendas that often work against the coordination they profess to want".

Another responded explained that even though duplication was avoided to a greater extent, the process delayed the response to the people from September/October 2007 to December/January 2008. This was as a result of divergent views about the effect of the disaster between the donors and players on the ground which resulted in delay in releasing funds (interview, respondent 10, August 5, 2008). In a response to a question about how they ensure that relief got to the affected people, an interviewee noted that monitoring was done to find out what was sent to a community or sub-district, how it was distributed, in what quantities and when? And there were instances from our monitoring report that showed that food did not get to the targeted people. This was attributed to fact that either partner organisations (not WFP and UNICEF) were not doing their work or the implementing agencies were not able to get the relief to the victims (Interview, respondent 4, July 16, 2008).

The poor targeting was also revealed by the research as a constraining factor that affected the outcomes of the coordination. Respondents indicated that victims received fewer rations than was planned for them and attributed this to poor targeting of the affected. They pointed out that, poor households that were not registered as victims of the disaster also came out and received the ration. Therefore, people who were planned to receive 12 kg of maize per month ended up receiving less than 6 kg. Implementing or distribution offers were not able to separate the chronically poor from the disaster victims hence they targeted every poor person and that increased the beneficiary list and as such reduced the quantity of relief items received per person. This finding shows that targeting is as important as coordination if actors are to achieve the desired outcomes meeting the needs of the affected population.

A respondent noted that they set vulnerability criteria for the identification and selection of the victims most in need: a) community identification - the community must have been affected by the floods, b) to identify farmers who have lost their livelihood in the community as a result of the disaster, c) identify households with pregnant and lactating mothers and also children under five years because these people are considered the most vulnerable, and d) female household heads were to be targeted. In all these categories, the respondent noted that assessments were to be carried out to determine whether they really cannot cope with the situation however, there were difficulties in getting people to do the targeting (interview, respondent 5, August 6, 2008). This suggests that targeting is a very complicated activity and for that matter people undertaking it should be well grounded in the criteria and knowledge in vulnerabilities which require sufficient training to acquire such skills.

Field work in two of the affected communities also revealed that the affected did not receive relief on time and some of those who were affected did not even receive. In separate informal group interaction with the affected people in the two communities, respondents complained that food relief was inadequate to feed a household. The general views of the respondents in C1 who received food are captured in a statement by one of them (a sub-chief):

> *when the water destroyed our farms and our houses, we were here and they came (they said they were government disaster people) and wrote our names. About a month later they came back with eight mini bags o maize, 4 packs of roofing sheets and 12 blankets. Every body in the village here make their farms along the river because the land around here is not fertile and is also not large enough. Our big land that is fertile was taken over by the forestry people and we are bared not to cultivate there. The eight bags were inadequate to serve every household. So what they did was give two bowls each to house heads. I received two bowls full of maize but you see my house has about 63 households. How can we share two bowls of maize or how can you the head eat whiles your brothers, their wives and children sleep without food?*

This concern of the beneficiary points to the fact that the relief was not enough to provide the needed calories (Vaux 2001: 2-5) or to put them back to the position they were before the disaster(Anderson and Woodrow 1989: 2).

One responded who had a greater part of his house collapsed was even emotional as he narrated his story: "first when they came I was told that my name was among the list of beneficiaries by the NADMO official but later he told me that my name did not appear. In this community I was the most affected person in terms of damaged buildings. They distributed the roofing sheets and left me out but people who did not even have a single zinc room in their houses got the roofing sheets. I felt discriminated against and got angry and sold my cattle to reconstruct my house".

His story was collaborated by the group and one of them argued that he and many others felt it was politically motivated. The man was the former chairman of an opposition party and they felt that it was a political victimisation. The man himself played down the political issue and noted that the official himself was with him in the opposition before crossing carpet to the ruling party and that he is no more chairman of the party. Some body in the group reminded him that even though he relinquished his position, he has not come out publicly to declare his support for the ruling party like the other man did, so he is still viewed as belonging to the opposition otherwise why a glaring affected person will be denied relief. (Fernando and Hilhorst 2006: 296) have raised concern about relief being diverted to achieve political ends and distributing to followers of government while withholding it from those who are not loyal to the government. The story was not different in C2 and C3. People complained that they were told their names did not appear meanwhile those who were not even affected received relief. Others noted that the relief came later and too little.

The principles of impartiality and neutrality were compromised in these scenarios. It also portrayed lack of proper targeting of the beneficiaries. The interviews with NGOs also revealed the lack of proper targeting and inaccurate data as some of the challenges the coordination faced in achieving the intended out comes for the affected people. This suggests that coordination is not a

panacea to achieving effective relief operations. While coordination may be necessary to avoid duplication and ensure that resources are not concentrated at one region of an operation, the capacity and ability of the implementing agents at the community level is more crucial to achieving effective delivery of relief to the people who really are affected and needing assistance. These findings indicated the reason for the author to modify the Bryson et al framework to include the component comprising the implementing agencies that do not form part of the IAC process, but whose activities affect the outcomes of the coordination

Chapter 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings, its significance and recommendations for future research on the topic. The research set out to explore the process of inter-agency coordination in response to the humanitarian needs of the affected people during the 2007 flood disaster in Northern Ghana. The aim was to identify successes and constraints and how the capacity of local organisation's are built to effectively target the most affected for relief aid.

The case study falls under natural disasters. These organizations were selected because of their involvement in the relief operations. The research adopted a mixed method of data collection: qualitative semi-structured interviews with managers, employees, consultants who were involved in the relief operations and focused group discussions with some of the affected people in two communities. Using the framework proposed by Bryson et al (2006), participants were asked questions on issues under the following themes: the formation the collaboration, process aspects, structure and governance issues, constraints and contingencies as well as the outcomes. The key findings of the paper are summarised as follows.

CONCLUSIONS

Although turbulences and failure/potential failure of government or single organisation to respond to the disaster situation as were identified as initial conditions leading to IAC, the most driving condition for the coordination was to avoid duplication and ensure that resources are effectively managed. The general belief was that if their efforts are coordinated, duplication will be avoided and there will be wider response coverage as efforts are spread in different communities.

Coordination was found to be successful among organisations that had formal or existing relationships or agreements (sector coordination) than it was among those without such relationships INGOC).

Agencies with large financial and logistical resources emerged as convenors, sponsors and leaders. This is particularly so in the case of the sector coordination.

The interviews show that there was hierarchical relationship among the participant organisations in the coordination process especially among the sub-sector coordination. This relationship provided accountability which contributed to the apparent success of the sub-sector coordination over the INGOC.

The study revealed that within the consortium, members were seeking to project their organization and gain more publicity than contribute to the success of the overall coordination. With regards to the sub-sectors, members played to the rules of the game. This could be attributed to the leadership, resource power and the systematic rules that governed the sector coordination.

The presence of contingency plans in UN System enhanced the sub-sector coordination. The reverse is true in the case of the INGOC.

Overall, perceptions of the respondents in terms of the effectiveness of the coordination in avoiding duplication were positive indicating that the coordination succeeded in minimising duplication of efforts.

Difficulty in targeting the most affected for relief items was cited as one of the greatest challenges to the coordination process.

Lack of financial, logistics and skilled personnel affected the delivery of relief to the most affected victims.

Interviews with some affected people in three communities indicated minimal outcomes of the coordination efforts. This is attributed to lack of capacity of the implementing actors to effectively target and deliver relief to the real victims.

The study revealed that there was no capacity building of staff included in the coordination process. Although some INGOs organised training sessions

for their partners on basic standards in humanitarian relief operations, the training did not cover other participants.

Despite the success of the coordination in avoiding duplication during the relief operations, the overall objective of achieving the greater outcomes for the affected people was not successfully achieved. The study found that most of the affected people didn't received relief items at all or that relief was too little to make the needed impact. Thus the call for proper coordination of actors in humanitarian relief as a panacea for achieving synergy for the affected people needs to be re-examined. Coordination may be successful in avoiding duplication, but the capacity of the implementing agencies at the community level is highly important if relief is to be properly targeted and fairly distributed to the most affected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To make inter-agency coordination itself more effective in avoiding duplication and maximising the use of available resources, NGOs should form a standing committee that meets regularly to discuss issues. Members need not be physically present in meetings at all times but there should be a mechanism through which members can contribute to the discussions that can make the standing committee effective. For example the committee can form blog on the internet where all members can subscribe and make contributions to any issue that is under discussion. This standing committee should serve as the body to coordinate the activities and resolve conflict of interest that arises. The standing committee should be institutionalised in the various organizations so that in an organizations memory, some body from a particular department is by the organization's rule a member of the standing committee.

NGOs need to broaden their scope of operations to include emergency relief in their development plans because natural disasters occur spontaneously and response should be faster if they are to save lives and protect the development gains they made.

NGOs through the standing committee should in times of disaster present one proposal detailing what each organization will be responsible for. In that

case donors or UN agencies can easily coordinate the activities than dealing with individual organizations on proposal basis. Although there could be conflict among the NGOs in relation to which organization do what activities, such conflicts should be better dealt with by the standing committee.

Proper coordination should seek not only at ensuring that duplication is avoided or that resources are effectively managed, but should also aim at enhancing the capabilities of the implementing agencies at the community level to be able to effectively target and deliver relief in accordance with international standards. Since the main aim of IAC is to ensure that relief gets to the affected people at the right time and in the right quantities, then the capacity of the implementing agencies is crucial in achieving that objective.

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ANNEX I

PROFILES OF ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION A

A is a non-profit, non-governmental organization. The organization's mission is to improve the quality of life of low-income, disadvantaged individuals in developing countries through the provision of sustainable human resource development services.

The organization has been in operation since 1970. During this period its work has focused on training the least-educated; most socially and economically underprivileged youth and adults in Ghana and has aimed at turning them into productive, employable, well-esteemed members of their communities. Currently, it operates in eight out of the ten administrative regions of Ghana, and designs and implements programs in the following sectors: vocational and technical skills, food security and nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation, maternal child health, HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, entrepreneurship and business development and micro-finance.

The organization has been working in the Northern Region with an office in Tamale for the past 8 years. It is a key development partner of the government in the Northern Region and has been providing both development and humanitarian assistance to the population. The organization has a strong presence in the region with technical and field staff strength of 51 working in 9 districts in the Northern Region. It has a 14 acre Food Security and Nutrition training and demonstration centre and has been working very closely with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Information, and Ghana Health Service in program implementation. It also works with the University for Development Studies as well as the Savannah Agriculture Research Institute in the Northern region.

In response to the floods and a call for emergency relief proposal from UNDP/Africa 2000 Network, The organization mobilized a team to conduct a quick needs assessment in three most affected districts (which are at the same time the organization's target districts), to prioritize needs, select high impact interventions that would immediately provide relief, sustainably restore livelihoods and help improve the quality of life of flood affected populations.

ORGANIZATION B

Organization B is a Church based non-profit development NGO that coordinates all the development and relief programmes of the Assemblies of God Church, Ghana. The Assemblies of God Church through the organization seeks to minister to the material and social needs of the poor and

underprivileged in society and to emphasize and "practicalize" the truth of the biblical teaching concerning caring for the needy, alleviation of suffering, social justice and stewardship of resources.

This mission is achieved by mobilizing resources from their local churches, sister churches and partners both home and abroad. Although the Assemblies of God Church had operated clinics in Northern Ghana since the late 1940s, the organization was formally incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on January 24, 1991, and subsequently registered as a Non-Governmental Organization with the then Ministry of Social Welfare in April 1991. Since then it has played key roles in rural healthcare delivery, the facilitation of integrated rural development as well as emergency relief and rehabilitation of victims of natural/man made disasters, ethnic and socio-political conflicts.

As an agency, the organization is also affiliated to a number of associations including the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development (GAPVOD), Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG), Inter-NGO Consortium for Relief and Rehabilitation (INGOC), Ghana AIDS Network (GHANET), West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP), Ghana Network for Peace building (GHANEP) and the Association of Church Development Projects – Northern Ghana (ACDEP), Ghana Microfinance Network (GHAMFIN) and the Association of Financial Non governmental Organizations (ASSFIN).

Its mission is to work in partnership with communities and other like-minded agencies in the love of God, to find sustainable solutions to hunger, poverty, illiteracy, exploitation and diseases. The vision of the organization is to have in Ghana, communities where people manage their own affairs as good stewards of God's creation.

In fulfilling its vision and mandate as spelt out above, the organization has focused its activities on: Health Services; Education and Training for employable skills; Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Services; Community Infrastructure Development; Poverty Reduction Programmes; Advocacy, Conflict Resolution & Peace building; HIV/AIDS Awareness Education; Child Sponsorship/Family Support Programmes.

The organization was actively involved in the Inter-NGOs Consortium and has worked closely with other organization and NADMO during the disaster.

ORGANIZATION C

Organization C was incorporated in 1998 as non-ethnic, non-religious local indigenous social development organization Ghana. This is a response to

the need for an institutional mechanism to mobilize resources and implement programs and projects for the disadvantaged communities in the East Mamprusi District in the Northern Region.

The mission of the organization is to work with groups and communities in East Mamprusi District and beyond to empower them tackle poverty related issues for themselves. This will be done in partnership with other development organizations who share the same values as the organization. The vision of the organization is excellence in service delivery: to become one of the best service providing organizations in the district in particular and nation as a whole.

To achieve its mission and vision, the organization employs the strategy of working in partnership with other development organizations, promotes capacity building of groups and communities; generate information from communities; community mobilization and animation; provision of credit assistance to the groups; creating awareness on: health, human rights, good governance, advocacy issues, anti-bush fires and improvement of food security situation through integrated livelihood activities.

The organization believes in the participatory approach to development and therefore it works with communities and groups to analyze their own situations / challenges and explore alternative ways of solving these collectively using the Policy Analysis for Participatory Poverty Alleviation (PAPPA) approach.

Its activities include community mobilization and Group formation: this is the creation of awareness of the need for people to mobilize both human and material resources within and without the locality for sustained cultural, social and economic development, particularly in the area of self-help initiatives. Group formation is very much encouraged in communities as this has become one sure way of accessing capital by women groups in particular to start or enhance small- scale business set-ups and income generation activities for economic prosperity.

Micro-credit: In an attempt to address the short- term needs of our constituents, assistance in the form of loans is given to groups; mostly women groups, that meet our standards to start or expand their income generation activities, so that the profits derived therein can systematically defray the loan and help support their daily life. Credit is also given to some innovative groups who undertake small-scale production of some basic local products like sheabutter extraction and soap making.

Integrated Livelihoods Programme (ILP): The programme purpose is to increase the food and income security of resource- poor men and women in

the East Mamprusi District. Three re-enforcing components are used to achieve this:

a. Crop production: Under this programme, Farmers in 6 communities supported with animal traction (bullock and plough) for land preparation; Farmers in 4 communities assisted with donkey and cart to transport food items from the farms and to the markets; Farm implements such as cutlasses, Willington boots, gloves distributed to farmers in 4 communities; Training farmers on composting, post harvest management etc.

b. Livestock production: Where small ruminants (sheep & goats) with 187 beneficiaries made up of men and women; Poultry; and Piggery are the main focus.

c. Agro-forestry: Four (4) community nurseries established and community and individual plantations started. Tree species planted include teak, mahogany, nim and some local species.

HIV/AIDS AWARENESS CREATION: Targets remote communities and schools to create awareness on the aids pandemic and its impact on human resource and food security at the household level as well as the society.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (People's Voices and Rights project): This is aimed at provoking the minds of people on their fundamental human rights as well as their responsibilities as citizens of Ghana. Improving participation in local governance especially women's participation in decision- making at the household, community and the district levels. The project also seek to promote interaction between the masses and service providers like the District Assembly and decentralized Government agencies while promoting the involvement of all, particularly women in the decision-making arrangement at all levels.

Community-driven Initiative for Food Security (CIFS): This is a food security programme that supports communities to develop their own food security initiatives through the strengthening of the District assembly substructures. A total of 25 communities will benefit by the end of 2009.

ORGANIZATION D

This is an aid organization fighting poverty and injustice and helping people each year to find routes out of poverty throughout the world. The mission is to create lasting change in poor communities with more than 60 years' practical and hands-on experience. The programmes tackle the deep-seated root causes of poverty, not just the consequences. It works in partnership with businesses and governments all around the world to help them do their bit to confront poverty. The organization deals with challenging and complex issues such as HIV and AIDS, conflict by providing aid to the affected and the needy.

The organization is been operating in Ghana sins 1994, fighting HIV and AIDS, improving health care, especially HIV testing and treatment, improving access to quality education, helping families to improve their income, for example by giving them access to cheap loans. Strengthening community-based organizations in Ghana by helping them work with government institutions and the private sector to foster more effective development.
Reducing poverty in Ghana through savings and loans projects which enable poor families to save their income and take out loans to make small investments, such as in tools or livestock. This then improves their lives and increases their future income.

ORGANIZATION E

The organization has been operating in Ghana in 1963 with its involvement in the resettlement of persons displaced by the formation of the Volta Lake and has since intervened in other sectors including transport, health, education, relief and emergency operations.

The current Programme is implemented in northern Ghana and supports the Government in the health and education sectors. The aims of the programme are to:

Reduce the level of malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under five years old; improve attendance and completion rates among children in primary school; improve the national capacity to implement and scale up supplementary feeding and on-site school feeding programmes; increase the demand for domestic farm produce by purchasing 60 percent of food commodities locally; support the manufacturing and distribution of locally produced fortified commodities such as corn soya blend, iodized salt and palm oil; phase-out of all multilateral development food aid by 2010

In the health sector, the objective is to improve the health and nutrition status of 60,000 pregnant and nursing women and children under-five years old, at risk of malnutrition. At community-managed health centres, women receive nutrition and health education, pre and post-natal care and take-home rations in the lean season. Children receive a cooked meal 260 days a year and pre-school education. Over 80 percent of nutrition centres have been transformed into preschools, providing early childhood nutrition and education that leads to higher enrolments in primary school.

The organization supports the education sector in two ways: by providing 42,000 girls in upper primary and junior secondary school with take-home rations and with a school feeding programme for 290,000 primary school children. The activities in health and education are linked through common targeting in order to achieve the life-cycle approach to nutrition.

The organization is providing food aid to targeted refugees from Liberia and Togo. Since 2004, it has been giving monthly food rations to some 10,000 Liberian refugees who arrived after the West Africa regional crisis in Cote

d'Ivoire and Liberia in 2002. Other vulnerable people such as the chronically ill and malnourished children are also beneficiaries.

ORGANISATION F

The NADMO was established in 1996 in response to the declaration of the 1990s as the period of International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) by the United Nations (UN). NADMO was to be "responsible for the management of areas affected by disasters and similar emergencies, for the rehabilitation of persons affected by disasters and to provide for related matters". The mission of the organisation is: "to manage disasters by co-ordinating the resources of Government institutions and developing the capacity of voluntary community-based organisations to respond to similar emergencies. Among its responsibilities, NADMO is to ensure that there are appropriate and adequate facilities for the provision of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

ANNEX II

Combined Effects of Drought and Floods on Crop Production in Northern Region For 2007

CROP	TOTAL CULTIVATED AREA (HA)	EXPECTED PRODUCTION (MT)	AREA LOST AS A RESULT OF DROUGHT + FLOODS (HA)	EXPECTED SHORTFALL IN PRODUCTION (MT)	SHORTFALL IN PRODUCTION (%)
MAIZE	102,962	118,406	22,208	25,539	22%
RICE	37,761	81,564	3,075	6,642	8%
YAM	100,870	1,095,448	5,480	59,513	5%
CASSAVA	86,167	750,514	1,811	15,774	2%
SORGHUM/ MILLET	98,236	89,395	7,676	6,985	8%
GROUNDNUT	105,867	94,222	17,805	15,846	17%
TOTAL	531,863	2,229,549	58,055	130,299	Average = 6%

Source: MoFA, NR, Presentation at a Stakeholder meeting in Tamale, 12th September 2007

Affected Districts, Number of Internally Displaced Persons, Number of Households and Destroyed Houses.

DISTRICT	PERSONS INTERNALLY DISPLACED	# OF HOUSEHOLDS	DESTROYED HOUSES (Figures as of 17/09/07)
WEST MAMPRUSI	25,288	4,215	5,426
SAVELUGU-NANTON	9,365	1,561	183
TOLON-KUMBUNGU	23,910	3,985	1161
BUNKPURUGU-YUNYOO	4,672	779	90
SABOBA-CHERIPONI	26,890	4,482	350
EAST MAMPRUSI	5,108	851	500
EAST GONJA	4,464	774	-
WEST GONJA	47,476	7,913	-
CENTRAL GONJA	52,873	8,812	-
GUSHEIGU	2,240	374	
KARAGA	500	84	
ZABZUGU-TATALE	420	70	
TOTALS	**203,388**	**33,900**	**7,710**

Source: NADMO, N/R; 3rd October 2007

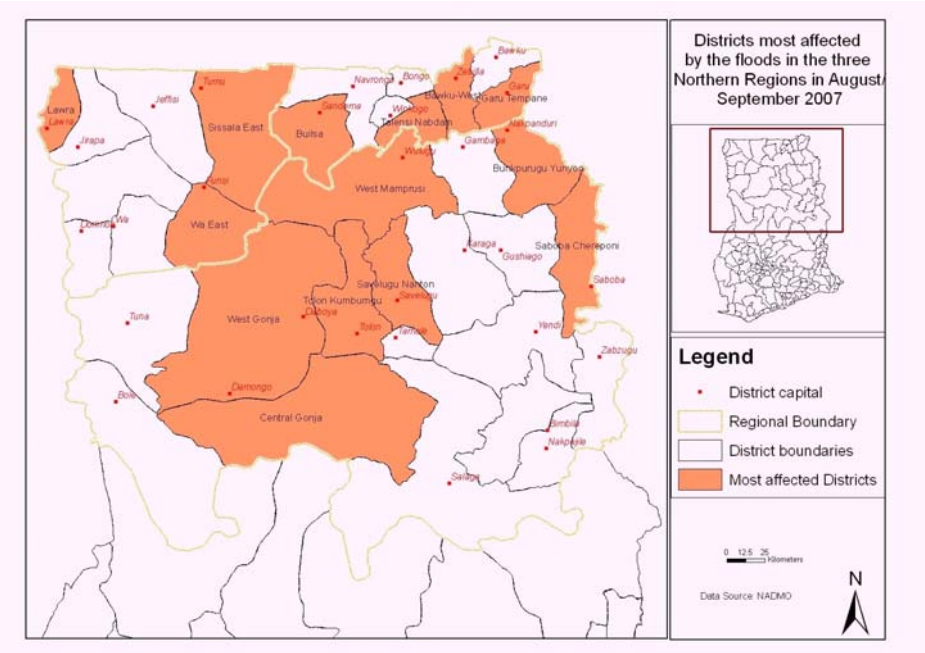
ANNEX III

Pictures of farms showing signs of drought

Source: OICI, Relief and livelihood restoration strategy for flood affected households in the northern region, October 17, 2007

ANNEX IV

MAP SHOWING FLOOD AFFECTED DISTRICTS



Source: NADMO