

Integrating environment in humanitarian action - a brief overview

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An aerial photograph of a village in a flood-prone area. A wide, muddy river or floodplain dominates the upper half of the image, with some small islands of land and trees. The lower half shows a road with several cars, and a cluster of small houses with corrugated metal roofs. The entire image has a green overlay with white text.

Integrating environment in humanitarian action

Humanitarian and environmental goals go *hand in hand*.

- Environmental stewardship reduces conflict drivers and increases resilience.
- Humanitarian action can impact the natural environment negatively, affecting livelihoods.

Challenges seen in the past

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- Deforestation
 - Groundwater depletion
 - Ruined livelihoods
 - Environmental contamination

The background image shows a village with several buildings, including a prominent one with a corrugated metal roof. In the foreground, there is a large, messy pile of plastic waste, including many clear and green plastic bottles, along with some organic debris like leaves. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

Tanzania:

570km² of forest affected by people cutting trees for shelter and fuel

Maldives:

piling debris from post-tsunami cleanup operations **threatened** sea and groundwater.

Darfur:

Poor wastewater management lead to **disease-carrying vectors** and irresponsible use of water

What has been done so far?



Recurring recommendations

1. System-wide accountability
2. Environmental mainstreaming
3. Advocacy & evidence
4. Funding

1. SYSTEM-WIDE ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY

- Lack of leadership and accountability for environment during humanitarian action
- Lack of monitoring of activities, limited learning
- Years of neglecting the environment, which needs to be highlighted as cross-cutting issue

2. MAINSTREAMING

- Systematically integrate environment in humanitarian policy, practice and funding, linking to humanitarian programming tools
- Vertical mainstreaming: direction and support from cluster leads and donors
- Horizontal mainstreaming: utilizing technical expertise, establishing working groups, sharing knowledge, raising awareness

3. ADVOCACY & EVIDENCE

- Build the evidence-base
- Document and share case studies on what has and has not worked
- Translate evaluation and assessment recommendations into action
- Adopt and execute strong joint advocacy strategies

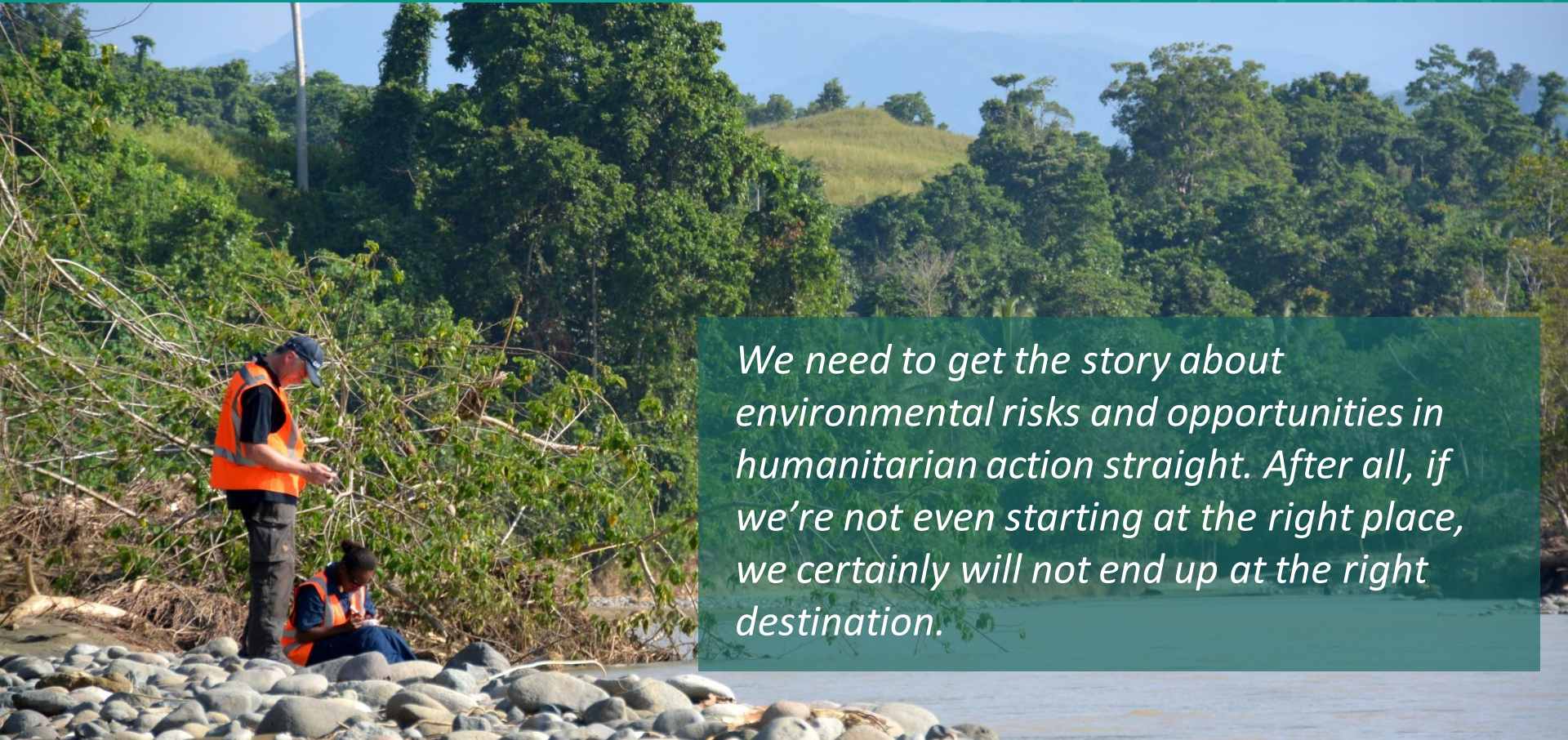
4. FUNDING

- Donors should adopt environmental mainstreaming policy for humanitarian aid.
- Donors should commit to longer-term funding (joint humanitarian-development analysis).
- Donors should make environmental considerations a requirement.

OPPORTUNITIES



- Make use of existing momentum, linking to reform agendas and SDGs
- Link to localization push
- Utilize existing expertise and capacities
- Build upon mainstreaming experiences of gender and disaster risk reduction
- Strengthen existing mechanisms and initiatives
- Become a champion of change



We need to get the story about environmental risks and opportunities in humanitarian action straight. After all, if we're not even starting at the right place, we certainly will not end up at the right destination.



Contact the JEU to find out more about the services you can request to be better prepared for and rapidly respond to environmental emergencies.