



ODI Global and NEAR's

Advisory Panel

on the

Future

of

Humanitarian Action



Global South perspectives

The Advisory Panel's Vision Paper

April 2025

ODI Global and NEAR establish an **independent advisory panel** to support key decision-makers, and to ensure that a moment of near collapse can also be a moment of **much-needed change**.

The panel includes leaders of Global South NGOs; representatives from aid-recipient countries and regional inter-governmental bodies; individuals with experience of the NGO, UN and Red Cross Movements; and experts with deep knowledge of the functioning of the sector.

September 2025

The panel's vision paper is published:

***From 'ego-systems' to 'ecosystems':
renewing humanitarian action***



The Advisory Panel's Vision Paper

The Vision Paper identifies **four entry points for change**:

- **Ending the monopoly** of internationally-led delivery
- **Strengthening accountability** by shifting what we measure and who has control over knowledge and data
- Re-establishing **humanitarian legitimacy** through new political consensus
- Moving from permanent emergency response to **protracted, multi-dimensional crises**.

September–December 2025

Three dialogues are convened with leaders from the Global South – including Afghanistan, Gaza, Myanmar, Sudan, Somalia, Venezuela and beyond.

These dialogues are designed to **stress-test the ideas** held within the vision paper.

Opening remarks from the Dialogues

*'We want to be clear from the start: this is not a typical briefing. This is a listening **and** a working session, grounded in humility, openness, and reflection.*

*'You may hear ideas that challenge your assumptions. You may be invited to **sit with discomfort**, to unlearn, or to hear critiques of systems and practices we may be used to.*

*'We ask everyone here to listen deeply, stay curious, and resist the urge to problem-solve or defend. This is a space of **mutual learning, co-creation, and transformation**.*

*'By the end of today's session, we aim to arrive at a set of action-oriented recommendations that reflect **lived realities, bold ideas**, and the **political will** to do things differently.'*

Read on for soundbites of the perspectives shared in these dialogues →

Local actors' perspectives on the Advisory Panel's Vision Paper

On the legitimacy of the system

It's frustrating that most talk only about the funding. For many of us, who have lived these crises, we ask – **when has the system ever been good?**

Has the humanitarian system **ever** worked for crisis affected people?

Going forward, **justice, equality and solidarity** must be the foundation.



Local actors' perspectives on the Advisory Panel's Vision Paper

There is also the issue of **respect**. The ego-system does not respect the local voices and lived experiences.

If we just pull the plug on the current system, **what could and should we keep?**

I don't like the idea of 'renew' or 'rebuild' - **we need a whole new model.**

Everything has been shaped like OCHA - it is a **copy and paste** in every country.

If, like they say, they are already doing it, then **why** is the Reset and UN80 even needed?

We must **end the monopoly** of aid delivery.

Even the language used is often problematic: **beneficiaries**. Another example of the 'ego' in the 'ego-system'.

INGOs speak of localisation, but **do not act on it.**

On the existing 'ego-system'

Local actors' perspectives on the Advisory Panel's Vision Paper

On the proposed 'ecosystem'

The current ecosystem needs to be recognised. At a bare minimum, there should be **co-leadership**.

The reality is that **the ecosystem is already present** in many places.

I agree with the ecosystem approach, but we must remember that an 'ecosystem' **can transcend borders and be regional**.

There is a tension on the issue of **'sovereign ownership'**. Whose ownership is that? Where do civil society/local actors fit into that? What about governments that **do not want to lift their people up?**

We don't need to remove INGOs, but external measurements need to go. The system must be **nationally led**.

It's shocking that people **want to control diaspora funding** rather than understanding how to work with it.

We don't talk enough about **mutual aid and diaspora**.



Local actors' perspectives on the Advisory Panel's Vision Paper

Local data is not considered 'authentic'.

I would **not** keep the cluster coordination system.

Knowledge sharing needs to be done **differently**.

Data being gathered and presented is not transparent, and is likely **dishonest**.

Data is **not transparent**, and it is **not trusted** by communities.

On data and coordination



Want to find out more?

- **Learn more** about the Advisory Panel's work, and read the vision paper in full on the ODI Global and NEAR websites
- **Explore** the results of the Big Humanitarian Rethink digital consultation
- **Watch this space** for more analysis as the panel refines its thinking