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A Catalyst for Cooperation: The Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Humanitarian Response to Climate Change

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Climate change is predicted to lead to an increasing frequency of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies, yet scholars have not examined how the humanitarian community is responding to this issue. This article examines its initial engagement with the climate change regime and finds it was remarkably coordinated. Humanitarian agencies coauthored submissions to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the leaders of major humanitarian organizations spoke on co-organized panels on the humanitarian perils of climate change. In fact, the overarching trend was cooperation, not competition, among humanitarian agencies. This is an intriguing finding as it runs counter to the dominant account of a humanitarian marketplace in which actors are constantly competing for resources. Instead, this article suggests that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee played a significant role in mobilizing and coordinating humanitarian organizations' initial efforts. It highlights how and to what extent institutionalized cooperation between international organizations enables further cooperation in new issue areas and regimes. Scholars of international organizations, global environmental politics, and humanitarianism will be interested in how cooperation emerged in the humanitarian regime and shaped subsequent interaction with the climate change regime. **Keywords**: *climate change, humanitarianism, international organizations, cooperation, refugees, migration.*

THE STRONGEST TROPICAL CYCLONE EVER TO MAKE LANDFALL, TYPHOON Haiyan, hit the Philippines on 8 November 2013. It broke all previous records with wind speeds at landfall of 195 miles per hour, sea surges up to 13 feet, and leaving 1.9 million people homeless.[1] This storm was part of a trend of increasing hydro-meteorological disasters triggered by climate change, which the 2014 International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report profiled. Humanitarian agencies play an important role in addressing crises created by climate change, particularly when countries do not have the capacity to respond. They have offered assistance to people affected by natural disasters, be it typhoons in the Philippines, floods in Pakistan, or droughts in the Horn of Africa.

Yet states established today's principal humanitarian international organizations with very distinct mandates that did not include responding to climate change or natural disasters. The United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR), for instance, was established in 1950 to offer legal protection to refugees of World War II. Similarly, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was created in 1946 to offer food and health care to children and mothers in postwar Europe. Meanwhile states established the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 1951 to transport labor migrants from Europe to the Americas and Australasia. In the intervening decades, these intergovernmental organizations have taken on new tasks—including responding to natural disasters—and, thus, have grown in scope and size. The growth of the "humanitarian business," particularly in the 1990s and 2000s, has been fueled by an increase in demand and the supply of financing from states, private institutions, and individuals.[2]

This evolution of the humanitarian "marketplace" has been well documented.[3] However, to my knowledge scholars have not examined the humanitarian community's engagement with the issue of climate change, as distinct from their regular responses to natural disaster emergencies. This is problematic given the significant impact that climate change is predicted to have, and is already having, in developing countries.[4] In this article, I ask, How have humanitarian intergovernmental organizations engaged with the climate change regime? I explore how humanitarian institutions are adapting to one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century. I find that the humanitarian community was coordinated in its initial engagement with the climate change regime. Humanitarian agencies coauthored submissions to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the leaders of major humanitarian organizations spoke on co-organized panels on the humanitarian perils of climate change. In fact, the overarching trend was cooperation, not competition, between humanitarian agencies. This is an intriguing finding as it runs counter to the dominant account of a humanitarian marketplace in which actors are competing for resources.[5]

How can we explain this coordinated response? In this article, I suggest that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Climate Change played a significant role in mobilizing and coordinating humanitarian organizations' initial efforts. The IASC, a relatively new coordinating mechanism in which representatives of humanitarian organizations meet regularly, offered humanitarian organizations an autonomous space away from member states' monitoring to forge individual and collective positions on climate change. The IASC includes all the UN humanitarian organizations: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), UNHCR, UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), and World Health Organization (WHO).[6] At regular IASC task force meetings in Geneva, these organizations considered how climate change would impact humanitarian activities, cooperated to write submissions to the UNFCCC, and

coordinated their lobbying efforts. This is a significant finding since the IASC has been overlooked by humanitarian scholars and deemed ineffective in some policy evaluations.[7]

Humanitarian scholars will be intrigued by a case of coordination in a marketplace that is usually described as highly competitive. Furthermore, they should take note of how the IASC has enabled humanitarian agencies to engage with new issue areas. Furthermore, this finding has important implications for scholarship on intergovernmental organizations. It illustrates how actors in a competitive marketplace may institutionalize coordination for mutual gain. There is some literature examining why international organizations cooperate, although it does not examine cases where coordination bodies have become institutionalized.[8] Meanwhile, global environmental politics scholars will be interested in the role of an interagency body in triggering regime interplay.[9] These scholars have highlighted how international organizations engage or bandwagon on the climate regime to gain ideational and material resources,[10] and have emphasized the role of international environmental secretariats in shaping regime overlaps.[11] They have not looked at how and to what extent institutionalized cooperation between international organizations shapes subsequent interaction with the climate change regime.

I begin this article by drawing on current international relations literature to identify why organizations might cooperate and what explains variation in their cooperation. I then turn to the humanitarian marketplace and examine the dynamics of competition and attempts at cooperation. In particular, I chart the history of the IASC, an institution created by the General Assembly in 1991 to ensure greater collaboration between humanitarian agencies in Geneva and on the ground. In the substantive section of the article, I examine the extent of cooperation in the humanitarian community's response to climate change and focus on efforts at the Geneva level. I draw on extensive primary research: I conducted over 100 interviews with humanitarian actors in Geneva, in New York, at the UNFCCC summit in Copenhagen (2009), and in the field in Kenya; and examined primary sources (humanitarian policy and advocacy documents as well as UNFCCC participation lists) published between 2000 and 2012. To conclude, I call on humanitarian scholars to examine more closely the role and impact of the IASC in other areas. My article focuses on one significant example of cooperation, but cannot make generalizations about the conditions under which humanitarian organizations will cooperate through the IASC or to what extent these efforts will be successful.

Competition or Cooperation Between International Organizations?

International relations scholars have examined when and why international organizations cooperate with other actors. Studies suggest organizations favor

exchanges where they can mutually benefit from greater aggregate access to commonly shared resources.[12] Organizations will avoid asymmetric relations where they exchange one resource—such as expertise, financing, or prestige—for another, as this leads to dependency. Cooperation is often enabled by the need to pool resources to "increase overall gains in prestige, funding or expertise."[13] However, it is constrained by divergent organizational cultures, different member state preferences, lack of complementary goals which enhances rivalry, and the fact that organizations are reluctant to give up their autonomy.

Cooperation, we might assume, will not occur if international organizations are operating in competitive regimes. In this case, resource dependency theorists would suggest that international organizations will compete to maximize their own resources and survive.[14] There may even be conflicts as international organizations engage in turf wars and territorial battles over what issue areas fall exclusively under their domain. This is especially so because organizations have overlapping mandates, and new issue areas, such as climate change, may not fit squarely within the purview of any single organization. Alternatively, organizations may decide to neither compete nor coordinate, but rather carry out their activities divorced from any interaction.

Cooperation varies in the scope of interaction and depth of pooled decisionmaking. Cooperation, in its most minimalistic sense, exists when organizations share information in an attempt to "promote transparency and avoid unintended conflict."[15] Cooperative actions range from minimalistic forms, such as information sharing and the coordination of activities (when organizations pursue complementarity and are willing to adapt their own activities to meet others' interests), to more maximalist forms, such as joint decisionmaking (when senior officials within organizations commit to and work toward a collective goal, seen in joint declarations) or joint implementation (when organizations seek financing collectively and deliver programs collaboratively).[16] Furthermore, organizations may even decide to institutionalize their cooperation and pool human resources and financial resources collectively to implement activities on a regular sustained basis. In this article, I identify how an institutionalized body shaped the extent and type of cooperation.

Scholars have emphasized several reasons why cooperation may deepen beyond sharing information. If an organization sees cooperation as bringing greater benefits than costs, it is likely to continue. Cooperation may also have a path dependent effect: the more organizations cooperate beyond the minimum, the more synergy and complementarity can unfold.[17] We may even see emulation occurring as the stronger the lines of communication, the more organizations come to resemble each other. Scholars have noted that cooperation can vary in form, from monadic (one-way) to dyadic (two-way), however there has been little study of the existence and effect of interagency networks (where a number of organizations meet in an institutionalized forum and collaborate on an ongoing basis).[18] We need a stronger understanding of what happens when organizations decide to commit to ongoing regular collective

decisionmaking. In this article, I take up this question by examining if and to what extent an institutionalized forum has enabled cooperation in a new issue area.

Competition or Cooperation in the Humanitarian Marketplace?

The humanitarian regime is often characterized as a competitive marketplace.[19] This is because in the past two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of humanitarian actors, coupled with a fragile funding environment.[20] States do not typically provide international humanitarian and development organizations with a stable and predictable funding base since donors prefer to earmark funds and retain control over how their money is spent.[21] As a result humanitarian organizations "wrestle with the belief that they are only as good as their last emergency."[22] This becomes particularly difficult as humanitarian organizations have increased their staffing to be able to respond to an increase in humanitarian disasters, but they lack an adequate funding base to sustain staff and structures.

The humanitarian regime is also competitive because there is no centralized authority dispersing resources. There is diffuse authority among a range of players, including intergovernmental organizations (e.g., UNICEF, UNHCR) and nongovernmental organizations ([NGOs], e.g., World Vision, Oxfam), supranational bodies (e.g., the European Union), and states (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States).[23] All these organizations may be providers of humanitarian assistance and also finance other smaller organizations (typically locally based NGOs) to supply humanitarian services. These actors compete for media salience and resources, and may be unwilling to cede controlling authority of organizational action to any other actor due to perceived national or organizational interests. Much of the scholarship on the humanitarian sphere has focused on the lack of coordination, let alone cooperation, in emergencies where humanitarian organizations are responsible for everything from building camps and supplying water to managing political negotiations between parties at war. In this view, we would expect humanitarian agencies to compete for any new financial or ideational resources.

In parallel to this increasing competition, states have sought to coordinate humanitarian operations since the 1970s. They have sought a more-effective centralized humanitarian organization and in 1972 established the UN Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO).[24] Humanitarian coordination is based on "a common framework to identify priorities and agree on a division of labor" between agencies.[25] The central concern is that organizations share information, take organizational strengths (be it in a region, or a skill set) into consideration when planning a humanitarian operation, and divide responsibilities so that no single institution provides shelter, for instance, while all provide food. [26]

In 1991, states began a series of major humanitarian coordination reforms when the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 47/182. The resolution

aimed to "strengthen further and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community, particularly the UN system, in providing humanitarian assistance."[27] It sought to provide coordination and leadership for the humanitarian community as a whole, in what had become a "crowded and complex system for provision of humanitarian relief characterised by inefficiencies, gaps and duplication."[28] These humanitarian reforms were a result of the first Gulf War, when confusion about the roles of various humanitarian actors gave rise to "serious tensions, disputes and inefficiencies in the UN's response."[29]

The 1991 General Assembly resolution created a new senior UN position, the emergency relief coordinator, and also established the IASC to coordinate humanitarian assistance.[30] This committee comprised the UN's humanitarian agencies as full members, and several organizations as "standing invitees."[31] IASC members have varying humanitarian roles: UNHCR is the expert at protecting refugees while the World Food Programme is the principal provider of food aid. Some of the IASC's members are also more accurately described as development actors (i.e., UNDP). The concept of an interagency committee was not an entirely new invention—during the Gulf War, an interagency working group had operated in Geneva.[32] What was new was that the IASC became a permanent mandated feature of humanitarian coordination, and no longer existed just during a crisis. A subsequent General Assembly resolution in 1993 clarified the IASC's mandate: to serve as the "primary mechanism for interagency coordination," under the emergency relief coordinator, to act in an "action-oriented manner on policy issues related to humanitarian assistance," and to formulate a coherent and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies.[33]

The 1990s was a period of major humanitarian reform. Alongside the creation of the IASC, the General Assembly also established a new Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and assigned the emergency relief coordinator to lead this office. However, the DHA proved to be dysfunctional, and in 1998 the UN created OCHA. OCHA's mandate was to monitor global humanitarian needs, share information with key stakeholders, and work more closely with IASC.[34] Alongside it, the function of the IASC evolved as was elaborated in the IASC Terms of Reference in 1998 and again in 2014. Its tasks include developing and agreeing on systemwide humanitarian policies,[35] allocating responsibilities among agencies, advocating for common humanitarian principles outside the IASC, and identifying and addressing gaps in mandates where a lack of operational capacity exists.[36] The IASC is based in Geneva and comprises a working group of representatives from each member organization and two annual meetings of the heads of agencies ("the principals"). The committee can establish Task Teams to deal with specific policy-issues or be emergency specific.[37] States also instructed the IASC to act impartially and ensure that organizations are not compromised with respect to their mandates. In other words, states did not want the IASC to task organizations to fulfill oper-

ational gaps if this meant overstepping their mandates. It could not instruct organizations to work on a new issue area such as climate change, but could facilitate cooperation only within agencies' existing mandates.

In the 2000s, humanitarian reforms and cooperation continued. A major breakthrough was the IASC's new cluster approach to coordinate assistance in humanitarian emergencies. It established eleven sectors (clusters), including water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), food and nutrition, shelter and camp management, and protection. Each cluster had a nominated lead agency responsible for coordinating all organizations and being the provider of last resort should gaps appear. The cluster system, which operates in Geneva and in the field, has received mixed reviews. Some are critical while others see it as flawed but an improvement on past coordination.[38] Although the cluster system has been the focus of much policy debate, there has been little scholarly literature on the extent that the IASC enables cooperation in what is also a competitive marketplace. I now turn to the IASC role in the humanitarian response to climate change. We might expect competition here as the climate regime offered extensive financial and ideational resources.[39] Furthermore, states did not explicitly instruct humanitarian agencies to cooperate, or even engage, with the climate regime. So, why and to what extent did they cooperate?

The Humanitarian Response to Climate Change

Most humanitarian agencies were not established to deal with climate change or natural disasters, but rather for humanitarian emergencies arising from warfare. In recent decades many have responded to droughts, particularly in the Sahel, and floods. However, it is only relatively recently that the humanitarian community has connected these operational activities to debates on the consequences of climate change. In this section, I examine when and how the humanitarian community engaged with the international climate change regime. I focus on the international dimension of humanitarian policymaking in Geneva and inputs into the UNFCCC process, rather than country-level operational responses. This is because everyday humanitarian activities—providing water, shelter, and protection—may not change substantially. What is changing is the increased frequency of meteorological natural disasters and how the international community mobilizes resources to respond to these.[40] I examine the causes for, and extent of, cooperation.

No Cooperation on Climate Change (1990–2007)

Humanitarian organizations had minimal engagement with the climate change regime for much of the 1990s and early 2000s. There were several reasons for this. First, the climate change regime during the 1990s was almost exclusively focused on mitigation, which had little relevance to humanitarian activities.[41] States met at the UNFCCC to discuss how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

and drew up the Kyoto Protocol, but there was little discussion over adaptation—how to prepare countries for the impacts of climate change. Indeed, environmentalists were concerned that adding adaptation to the UNFCCC agenda might undermine the argument to mitigate emissions.[42] Humanitarian organizations had little reason to engage in debates over mitigation and were caught up in their own reform process.

An opening for humanitarian agencies arose in the 2000s as the UNFCCC shifted its focus to adaptation. States began to discuss how to prepare for the impacts of climate change. In 2006, for instance, at the Nairobi UNFCCC summit African states urged developed countries to finance adaptation in Africa, arguing they were among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Subsequently, states finalized the Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation, a five-year plan to support climate adaptation.[43] Then, in 2007 in the Bali Action Plan, states "attached equal importance" to mitigation and adaptation.[44] This was a significant shift as it offered a reason for organizations outside the core climate regime to engage in the UNFCCC. Climate change would increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Developing countries were seen to be most vulnerable, and least resilient, and humanitarian agencies were experts at helping developing states deal with such emergencies.

In addition, states at the UNFCCC established new funds, such as the Adaptation Fund, to assist developing countries to adapt to climate change.[45] States also pledged significant resources—in 2009 at the Copenhagen summit, states pledged to provide $30 billion in new and additional financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation.[46] This would be scaled up to $100 billion by 2020. This represented a large commitment by states for new financing, although ambiguities exist over what exactly "additional" means.[47] Much of this financing would flow through existing international organizations that were implementing agents for many of the new funds.[48]

Some individual humanitarian actors did begin to link their work to climate change regime in the 2000s. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was one of the first humanitarian organizations to engage with climate change. It established a Climate Change Center in 2002 in the Netherlands when it realized that the world needed to prepare for the humanitarian implications of climate change.[49] The director of the center, Madeleen Helmer, attended the climate change summits on an annual basis from 2003 onward. Some other IASC members sent delegations to the UNFCCC in the 1990s and 2000s, including UNICEF, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, WHO, and the FAO.[50] However, there was no coordinated humanitarian message on climate change in the early 2000s.

Information Sharing and Joint Decisionmaking (2008–2010)

In 2008, Helmer put climate change on the IASC agenda for the first time.[51] In an IASC working group meeting, she outlined how the UNFCCC had fo-

cused predominantly on mitigation and not adaptation. She also highlighted that discussions had centered on climate change's impacts on the environment and animals (e.g., the symbolic polar bear set adrift by the melting of the polar ice cap), but neglected the dire effects that climate change would have on people, particularly in the developing world.[52] This, she proposed, was where the humanitarian community's role came in.

As Helmer spoke to the IASC meeting, members gained interest and she won time to elaborate. Some agencies were skeptical since they did not see climate change as a core part of their mandate. UNHCR, for example, was concerned by the policy and media focus on "climate refugees," or those who would allegedly be displaced by climate change. The concept of climate refugees was problematic because it blurred a critical distinction between the legal definition of refugees and other displaced peoples who were not afforded the same protection rights by international law.[53] A "refugee," as defined by the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, is only someone with "a well-founded fear of persecution based for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his country of nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."[54] However, most IASC members were receptive to Helmer's message and decided to establish a Task Force on Climate Change to coordinate their UNFCCC lobbying. This moment was a critical juncture in the humanitarian community's involvement in climate change.

At its inception the IASC Task Force on Climate Change had a challenging task ahead: it had to find and develop an advocacy strategy and a common message to deliver at the UNFCCC meeting at Poznan in December, which was then less than six months away. The task force met on a regular basis in Geneva with delegates (or climate change focal points) from each of the IASC member organizations. Members decided to deliver one consolidated paper, rather than twenty individual papers, to show a coherent coordinated humanitarian approach.[55] The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) appointed a full-time coordinator to lead the IASC and set up two subcommittees under the task force: one on advocacy and another on climate change and migration. The humanitarian community faced a "huge learning curve" since most IASC agencies "knew very little about climate change policy and the UNFCCC process."[56] A number of agencies were "nervous of climate change"—and, in particular, apprehensive of the science and of entering onto "someone else's turf."[57] The science community and the development community had been involved with the UNFCCC and were asking, "Why are you here?"[58] The task force enabled humanitarian agencies to discuss these issues, share information, and update each other, notably without member states monitoring their activities.

At Poznan in 2008, a record number of humanitarian actors attended the negotiations. In fact, all of the IASC members sent delegates, when previously

few had.[59] The IASC member organizations set up several side events and panel discussions at Poznan that highlighted the severe humanitarian impacts of climate change.[60] They made a number of submissions including: "Change, Migration and Displacement: Who Will Be Affected?"[61] and "Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and Risk Management Practices: Critical Elements for Adaptation to Climate Change" in which they encouraged member states to "take account of, and manage, the humanitarian consequences of climate change, including protecting those who may move as a result."[62] They were still, however, minor players in a crowded landscape of other international organizations, civil society, and interest groups. Yet they made a "tremendous change in their position in a short time" and, in the words of one member, IASC "went from being a non-player to a player."[63]

The IASC agencies used Poznan as a stepping stone in preparation for Copenhagen. They were determined to demonstrate that the humanitarian community was an asset in the climate change debate and to highlight that they had adaptation programs that were successful and could be scaled up.[64] Over the course of 2009, the IASC focused on monitoring negotiation texts, making submissions, and developing a strong advocacy campaign for Copenhagen. The pressure of producing a position for Copenhagen meant that the IASC members were "very disciplined" in making decisions and getting agencies to sign off on climate change statements at a senior level.[65] The IASC thus created impetus within agencies to engage with climate change—not only did member organizations share information, but they also made joint decisions on submissions and advocacy strategies. For example, UNHCR and IOM, both members of an informal working group on Migration/Displacement and Climate within the task force, made collective submissions arguing for "international cooperation to support urgent implementation of adaptation actions."[66] They argued that "adaptation strategies and action need to consider the humanitarian consequences of climate change, including migration, displacement and the need to prepare for and address them."[67] They also emphasized that internal or international migration should be considered as a possible adaptation strategy and included in any Copenhagen agreement.

These humanitarian organizations then turned out in force at the Copenhagen UNFCCC summit and lobbied delegates actively. The heads of all the major humanitarian intergovernmental organizations attended the UNFCCC negotiations for the first time and held major press conferences and made presentations. The informal subgroup on Migration/Displacement and Climate Change, for example, held a joint press conference and a high-level side event to advocate for the inclusion of migration as an adaptation strategy.[68] Their well-coordinated advocacy messaging, which was also supported by a large number of NGOs, contributed to a temporary success when the text was widely accepted by member states.[69] In the chaotic closing hours of the negotiations, the Copenhagen Accord was not adopted formally by all states. How-

ever, at the Cancun UNFCCC summit the following year, an agreement was reached and states endorsed paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Adaptation Framework on migration and displacement, calling for "measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change displacement, migration and planned relocation."

The IASC Task Force on Climate Change was also a forum for debate, and some competition, between humanitarian agencies. UNHCR and IOM, for instance, differed over the correct terminology for people displaced in the context of climate change. IOM was a strong advocate of the "environmental migration" concept and encouraged a sub–working group to form on climate change, displacement, and migration. However, UNHCR staff were concerned that the creation of such a working group would conflate different types of displacement. They emphasized that climate change could not produce "refugees" in the legal sense. Although they became members of the IASC informal group on Migration/Displacement and Climate Change, they sought to avoid the term "climate change refugees" and argued that existing mechanisms could be used to offer protection to those affected by natural disasters.[70] Their position was evident in the written submissions to the UNFCCC of the informal group on Migration/Displacement and Climate Change. What is most striking is that UNHCR and IOM were able to settle their differences to produce common advocacy and policy papers. This illustrates how the IASC shifted agencies from turf wars to cooperation, as it provided a regular institutionalized forum for organizations to work through many of their differences.

Joint Implementation? The Limits of Cooperation (2010–2013)

In 2010, the IASC Task Force on Climate Change came to the end of its fixed term (it was established to run for only a two-year period). In the final year, its focus shifted from advocacy to operations. The IASC released a report showcasing how humanitarian agencies were doing "adaptation" and addressing climate change in their programming.[71] Projects included disaster risk reduction in Nepal (FAO) and Tuvalu (Red Cross), health and agricultural education in Sri Lanka (WHO, FAO, and UNEP), and early warning systems for natural disasters in Central America (WFP).[72] Interestingly, the intergovernmental organizations that showcased their work were predominantly development organizations that were members of the IASC. The report thus inadvertently signals the challenges for humanitarian agencies in tackling adaptation. How should humanitarian agencies engage with the climate change regime, given that their mandate is to deliver emergency relief to the victims of political crises and natural disasters and not to implement development or disaster risk reduction activities? These questions are now being worked through at an agency level, in reference to their particular area of expertise, rather than at the interagency level.[73]

After 2010, the humanitarian communities' engagement with the climate change regime became more fragmented. IASC members no longer cowrote submissions to the UNFCCC, or worked on a common advocacy campaign to highlight the humanitarian cost of climate change. Rather organizations focused on their own streams of work. UNHCR, for instance, worked closely with the Norwegian government and the Norwegian Refugee Council to find solutions to assist those displaced across borders by climate change. They lobbied states in 2011 at the Nansen conference and at their 2011 ministerial meeting to offer protection to those displaced. Although their efforts did not result in a new protection framework, they did result in the creation of the Nansen Secretariat—a small group of states committed to finding solutions for those forced to move internationally by natural disasters. Meanwhile, the IOM continued to conduct research, compile reports, and work on climate change and migration in its operations. Comprehensive humanitarian cooperation on climate change advocacy and policy was largely limited to the IASC working group.

Why did the high degree of humanitarian cooperation toward the climate change regime end in 2010? One explanation is that humanitarian agencies had completed the tasks they could do collectively: they had put the humanitarian impacts of climate change on the UNFCCC agenda and in the public eye. Now, it was up to each agency, within its mandate, to develop its operational response. Second, humanitarian organizations may have looked to contribute instead to other forums—such as the Hyogo and Sendai Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction.[74] Yet the climate regime offers the largest opportunities of new financing, so we would expect them to continue to engage with the UNFCCC at some level. A third possibility is that the end of the task force meant that they lacked a mandated mechanism holding them together and driving collaboration. This is a likely scenario as the IASC catalyzed and institutionalized cooperation and, once the task force ended, IASC discussions turned to other issues.

Fourth, some would say that humanitarian agencies were cooperating to compete. In the lead-up to Copenhagen (the 2007–2009 period), it was in all of their interests to cooperate and maximize lobbying power at the UNFCCC. This meant they could maximize their chances that humanitarian concerns would be considered by states and adequately financed. In more general terms, we might expect organizations in a given regime to cooperate and maximize overall material and ideational resources vis-à-vis a new external opportunity. Once these resources have been secured, they will compete over its distribution. Cooperation for competition then gives way to pure competition.

However, it is difficult to prove that humanitarian actors cooperated to compete in this instance. First, humanitarian actors did not secure any commitments for financing from the climate change regime explicitly for humanitarian activities. While states pledged to finance adaptation and mitigation

activities, they did not see humanitarian agencies as conduits of this assistance. In fact, I am not aware of any explicitly humanitarian activities that have been eligible for climate financing. Second, states continue to make new pledges for climate financing—in December 2015, the United States committed to double its annual public grant funding for adaptation to at least $800 million by 2020. If humanitarian organizations were indeed cooperating to compete, we would expect them to still be lobbying states for climate financing for humanitarian activities.

Conclusion

The IASC catalyzed a common humanitarian response to climate change. Despite the fact that the humanitarian community is often characterized as operating in a competitive marketplace, these organizations did cooperate and pool resources over two years through the IASC Task Force on Climate Change. They developed a common humanitarian advocacy campaign, they coauthored submissions to the UNFCCC, and heads of humanitarian organizations spoke at UNFCCC side events. These humanitarian agencies echoed a similar message: climate change would lead to an increase in natural disasters and have dire impacts on developing countries, which were the least prepared for such humanitarian emergencies. It was part of an important shift away from viewing climate change as an environmental problem and toward seeing it as a problem that would impact deeply on human lives, particularly in the developing world. The 2008–2010 period was marked by significant cooperation in the form of information sharing and joint decisionmaking. However, cooperation did not extend to ongoing regular joint implementation, as in the cluster system.

Would we have seen humanitarian cooperation without the IASC? It is difficult to answer the counterfactual.[75] There are two main foreseeable scenarios—first, that humanitarian actors would not coordinate their actions. They would have attended the UNFCCC negotiations and made separate speeches and policy statements; they would not have coauthored submissions, developed collective reports and policies, or had a common lobbying platform, and may have competed for attention and financial resources.

A second scenario is that humanitarian organizations could have coordinated, but outside the IASC. We could have seen several networks emerging around common issue areas (e.g., migration and displacement) and lobbying occurring on this basis. There were some underlying organizational interests in cooperating: by pooling resources, they were more likely to maximize their lobbying efforts and be heard. There are also signs of other networks and consortiums being established outside the IASC—the IOM, for instance, established the Climate Change and Environmental Migration Alliance with academics and other NGOs. Furthermore, some IASC members

were involved in coalitions in other spheres—there was a collective UN approach to climate change led by the UN Secretary-General that left out non-UN IASC members.

What then was the added advantage of the IASC? The IASC was a regular forum in Geneva where humanitarian representatives knew each other and had cooperated on other issue areas (e.g., the cluster system and internally displaced persons). Cooperation in one realm could spill over into other realms, as functionalists have noted. However, the IASC did not catalyze cooperation on its own—Helmer clearly played a pivotal role in mobilizing the humanitarian community. Her agenda-setting speech at the IASC meeting convinced humanitarian agencies to engage with climate change. However, without the IASC, she would have had a difficult time getting all of the key actors in the same room and convincing them to set up a working group on climate change. The fact that many humanitarian agencies were new to climate change, and did not have entrenched positions, may also have facilitated cooperation. The IASC task force became a useful platform to refine and voice their organization's position.

Future research will need to examine how we can explain variation in the depth and scope of cooperation. In other words, what determines which issues humanitarian organizations will cooperate on (scope)? And how much will they pool resources and act collectively (depth)? To investigate this further, scholars could look at which issues have been raised in IASC meetings and when, and why, task forces have been created. For instance, researchers could contrast the IASC's work on gender mainstreaming with cases where cooperation has not occurred. In addition, scholars should ask: Under what conditions are these cooperative efforts effective at achieving collective aims? Just because the IASC established a task force, has produced policy papers and made high-level speeches, does not necessarily entail that significant changes have occurred as a result. The sharing of information and joint decisionmaking may not yield any significant results. Future research should examine the effectiveness of the IASC as an institution, as it has a central role in delivering humanitarian assistance.

Finally, the IASC is not a unique institution. There are other coordinating mechanisms in other sectors: the heads of the UN's twenty-nine specialized agencies meet in the UN Chief Executive Board, and multilateral development banks also hold an annual meeting of their presidents. Yet there has been little investigation of how effective these forums are at enabling collaboration; this should be the focus of scholars of intergovernmental organizations. Institutionalized cooperation may even trigger organizational change as agents can escape principals' monitoring and maximize their slack collectively. We should try to understand when and why international organizations cooperate, and if this can ever be a form of competition. The climate change regime is an interesting case to examine this because there are such high stakes, high pol-

icy attention, and financing involved. We can only hope that humanitarian organizations can cooperate and provide effective assistance to countries, like the Philippines, to cope with the dire impacts of climate change. ⊕

Notes

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3. Michael N. Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 1–49.

4. IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability,* 2014 www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/, accessed 10 May 2014.

5. Mark Dalton, Karin von Hipple, Randolph Kent, and Ralf Maurer, *Study Four: Changes in Humanitarian Financing: Implications for the United Nations* (Geneva: OCHA 2003); Alexander Cooley and James Ron, "The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the Political Economy of Transnational Action," *International Security* 27, no. 1 (2002): 5–39.

6. See IASC, "About the Inter-Agency Standing Committee," 2014, www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/, accessed 24 November 2014.

7. Policy studies include: Max Stephenson, "Toward a Descriptive Model of Humanitarian Assistance Coordination," *Voluntas* 17, no. 1 (2006): 40–56; Bruce Jones and Abby Stoddard, *External Review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University, December 2003). I am not aware of any explicit academic study of the IASC and it receives little or no mention in important recent monographs such as Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Michael N. Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," in Michael N. Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, eds., *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 2008), pp. 1–49.

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9. Olav Stokke, *The Interplay of International Regimes: Putting Effectiveness Theory to Work* (Lysaker, Norway: Fridtjof Nansen Institute, 2001); Sebastian Oberthür and Thomas Gehring, *Institutional Interaction in Global Governance, Synergy and Conflict Among International and EU Policies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

10. Sikkina Jinnah, "Climate Change Bandwagoning: The Impacts of Strategic Linkages on Regime Design, Maintenance, and Death," *Global Environmental Politics* 11, no. 3 (2011): 1–9; Nina Hall, "Money or Mandate? Why International Organiza-

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12. Bierman, "Towards a Theory of Inter-organizational Networking," p. 168.

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14. Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective,* Stanford Business Classics Series (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978).

15. Bierman, "Towards a Theory of Inter-organizational Networking," p. 168.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Dalton et al., *Study Four: Changes in Humanitarian Financing;* Jeff Crisp, "Refugees, Persons of Concern, and People on the Move: The Broadening Boundaries of UNHCR," *Refuge* 26, no. 1 (2009):73–76.

20. Dalton et al.

21. Erin R. Graham, "The Institutional Design of Funding Rules at International Organizations: Explaining the Transformation in Financing the United Nations," *European Journal of International Relations,* 2016 (forthcoming).

22. Ibid., p. 9.

23. Stephenson, "Toward a Descriptive Model of Humanitarian Assistance Coordination," p. 45.

24. Koenraad Van Brabant, "Opening the Black Box: An Outline of a Framework to Understand, Promote and Evaluate Humanitarian Coordination" (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, 2009), p. 8.

25. Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action (ATHA), *Humanitarian Coordination: An Overview* (Cambridge, MA: ATHA, January 2008), p. 6.

26. Ibid.

27. UN General Assembly, Res. A/RES/46/182 (19 December 1991), www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r182.htm.

28. Dalton et al., *Study Four: Changes in Humanitarian Financing,* pp. 8–9.

29. Minear et al., as quoted in Van Brabant, "Opening the Black Box," pp. 8–9.

30. UN General Assembly, Res. A/RES/46/182.

31. Standing invitees are: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the IFRC, InterAction, the IOM, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, and the World Bank.

32. Van Brabant, "Opening the Black Box."

33. UN General Assembly, Res. 48/57 (14 December 1993), http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r057.htm

34. Weiss, *Humanitarian Business.* The DHA was seen as a failure because it had no authority over the UN agencies that it was supposed to coordinate, it did not have the field-level expertise that other agencies did, and "it was resented where it took on an operational role that no other UN agency was filling—such as in demining and demobilization." Dedring, as quoted in Van Brabant, "Opening the Black Box," p. 9.

35. See, for instance, IASC, *Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance* (Geneva: IASC, 1999).

36. Note that the IASC is not the only network of humanitarian actors, although it is one of the most institutionalized. There are two other principal groups: the con-

stituent organizations of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, which are the ICRC, the IFRC, and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and networks of NGOs linked through three consortia: InterAction, ICVA, and SCHR. See http://hpcr-research.org/blog/vera-sistenich/2012-07-06/briefing-note-un-integration-humanitarian-coordination-policy-conside.

37. See also IASC, *Concise Terms of Reference and Action Procedures.* February 2014 (Geneva: IASC, 2014), p. 3.

38. UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees.* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2012), p.5, highlighted that "Humanitarian reforms initiated by the United Nations in 2005 have made international humanitarian action more efficient, accountable and predictable." See also Eric Stobbaerts, Sarah Martin, and Katharine Derderian, "Integration and UN Humanitarian Reforms," *Forced Migration Review* 29 (December 2009): 18–19; Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, Katherine Haver, Dirk Solomons, and Victoria Wheeler, *Cluster Approach Evaluation: Final Draft* (New York: OCHA Evaluation and Studies Section, 2007), p. 1; Weiss, *Humanitarian Business,* p. 161.

39. Nina Hall, *Displacement, Development and Climate Change, International Organizations Moving Beyond Their Mandates* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016); Hall, "Money or Mandate?"

40. Mackinnon Webster, Justin Ginnetti, Peter Walker, Daniel Coppard, and Randolph Kent, "The Humanitarian Response Costs of Climate Change," *Environmental Hazards* 8, no. 2 (2009): 149–163.

41. Unless one made the argument that humanitarian activities should try to reduce their own emissions. This argument was later made in the UN, when Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon initiated a "Green the UN Campaign," www.greeningtheblue.org/, accessed 14 February 2010.

42. Lisa Shipper, "Conceptual History of Adaptation in the UNFCCC Process," *Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law* 15, no. 1 (2006): 82–92.

43. UNFCCC, *Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change (NWP),* 2006, http://unfccc.int/adaptation/workstreams/nairobi_work_programme/items/3633.php, accessed 1 March 2011; Kati. Kulovesi et al., "UN 2006 Climate Change Conference: A Confidence-building Step?" *Climate Policy* 7 (2007): 255–261.

44. UNFCCC, "Bali Action Plan," Decision 1/CP.13, in *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session, Bali, 3 to 15 December 2007,* UNFCCC /CP/2007/6, 14 March 2008 (UNFCCC, 2008), http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf.

45. Erin R. Graham and Alexander Thompson, 2015. "Efficient Orchestration? The Global Environmental Facility in the Governance of Climate Adaptation," in Kenneth Abbott, Philipp Genschel, Duncan Snidal, and Bernhard Zangl, eds., *International Organizations as Orchestrators* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 114–138.

46. UNFCCC, *Copenhagen Accord* (18 December 2009), https://unfccc.int/meetings/copenhagen_dec_2009/items/5262.php. See also Åsa Persson, Richard Klein, Clarisse Siebert, Aaron Atteridge, Benito Muller, Juan Hoffmaister, Mihael Lazarus, and Takeshi Takama, *Adaptation Finance Under a Copenhagen Agreed Outcome* (Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute, 2009).

47. Nina Hall, "What is Adaptation to Climate Change? Epistemic Ambiguity in the Climate Finance System," working paper, 2016.

48. Barbara Buchner, Martin Stadelmann, Jane Wilkinson, Federico Mazza, Anja Rosenberg, and Dario Abramskiehn *Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2014,* (Climate Policy Initiative, November 2014).

49. See Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Guide, "Foreword," 2007, www.climatecentre.org/downloads/File/reports/RCRC_climateguide.pdf, accessed 29 Octo-

ber 2014. Kerstin Rosenow-Williams, "Environmental Migration and the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement," Chapter 8 in Kerstin Rosenow-Williams and François Gemenne, *Organizational Perspectives on Environmental Migration* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp.126–244.

50. The list of participants is available at the UNFCCC website, http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/items/3595.php#beg, accessed 10 December 2013.

51. IASC members, interviewed by the author, Geneva, 18 and 23 March 2010.

52. IASC member, personal communication with the author, 16 April 2010.

53. Hall, *Displacement, Development, and Climate Change.*

54. UNHCR, *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,* Art. 1a, par. 2 (1951).

55. IASC member interview, Geneva, 19 March 2010.

56. IASC member interview, Geneva, 23 March 2010.

57. IASC member interview, Geneva, 19 March 2010.

58. Ibid.

59. All twelve of the IASC members were there. Previously the UNDP, World Bank, and FAO (more development than humanitarian actors) had been regular attendees, but few of the others had attended.

60. Side events are held in parallel to the UNFCCC negotiations and a forum for nongovernmental organizations and international organizations to convey messages to delegates.

61. IASC, *Change, Migration and Displacement: Who Will Be Affected?* working paper submitted by the Informal Group on Migration/Displacement and Climate Change of the IASC, 31 October 2008 to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

62. IASC Informal Taskforce on Climate Change, "Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and Risk Management Practices: Critical Elements for Adaptation to Climate Change," submission to the UNFCCC Ad-hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action by the Informal Task Force on Climate Change of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 11 November 2008.

63. IASC member interview, 23 March 2010.

64. Ibid.

65. IASC member interview, 19 March 2010.

66. IOM, UNHCR, and the United Nations University in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council and the representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced peoples, *Climate Change, Migration, and Displacement: Impacts, Vulnerability, and Adaptation Options,* submission to the 5th Session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action Under the Convention (AWG-LCA 5), Bonn, 29 March–8 April 2009, p. 3.

67. Ibid., p. 3.

68. The IASC also held regional consultations on the humanitarian impacts of climate change. See Sarah Selby and Courtenay Cabot Venton, *Final Report: Addressing the Humanitarian Challenges of Climate Change: Regional and National Perspectives, Findings from the IASC Regional and National Consultations, May–June 2009* (Geneva: IASC, 2009)., p. 71.

69. For more on their lobbying efforts for paragraph 14 (f), see Koko Warner, "Climate Change Induced Displacement: Adaptation Policy in the Context of the UNFCCC Climate Negotiations," Legal and Protection Policy Research Series (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011).

70. UNHCR *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,* Art. 6 (a) (1950); UNHCR, *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,* Art. 1a, par. 2.

71. Selby and Venton, *Final Report: Addressing the Hunamitarian Challenges of Climate Change.*

72. Ibid., p. 24.

73. Note that there have been subsequent conversations on natural disasters, climate change, and displacement in the IASC. For instance, the Nansen Secretariat, which is advocating for a protection framework for persons displaced across borders by climate change or natural disasters, presented its work to the IASC on 4 April 2014. Its presentation can be accessed at IASC Documents, www.humanitarianinfo.org /iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-documents-default&mainbodyID=6&publish=0, accessed 22 May 2014.

74. Thanks to Professor Inge Kaul for this suggestion.

75. See Adam Przeworksi, "Institutions Matter?" *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 2 (2004): 527–540.