Series on the Changing World Order and its Implications for Humanitarian Action

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KUNO is the Platform for Humanitarian Knowledge Exchange based in the Netherlands. It serves as a collaborative network that brings together humanitarian practitioners, academics, policymakers, and other stakeholders to facilitate learning, reflection, and debate on pressing humanitarian issues. Through expert meetings, working sessions, training programs, and public debates, KUNO aims to improve humanitarian action by fostering cross-sectoral dialogue and knowledge sharing.

In a rapidly changing global world order, humanitarian action is confronted with difficult questions. The multipolar power division, the funding shocks, the shifting landscape of partnerships in action and resources, and the compounding need to transform towards meaningful local leadership are some of the key manifestations. To support reflection on these topics, KUNO hosted a series of lunch meetings, entitled 'The Changing World Order and its Implications for Humanitarian Action'. It allowed for the sharing of provocative perspectives and making some sense of the ongoing seismic changes, that stimulate mindset shifts.

In the first episode, two renowned academic voices reflected on the 'collapse of the liberal world order' and how this affects humanitarianism. Polly Pallister-Wilkins and Lata Narayanaswamy emphasised the political nature of humanitarian action, rooted in colonial histories, and made a call to foreground crisis-affected communities in any decisions on moving forward. In the second session, Themrise Khan and Arjan Hehenkamp shared their provocative proposals for the future of the field in response to the funding shocks. They argued that this is the opportunity to refocus humanitarian aid on its core: life-saving action and strengthening local response, distinct from development work. Also, serving affected populations should be the role of states primarily, if able and willing. The third session was a demonstration of how global power shifts drive a need for broadening the scope for partnerships, markets and donors. In the 'Gulf Rush' session, Yannick du Pont and Mohamed Skaik emphasised that, in light of declining Western humanitarian funding, exploring partnerships with Gulf states is increasingly crucial. However, they stressed that these collaborations should not be driven solely by financial motives, but rather by shared humanitarian objectives, gaining access to crisis-affected regions. The fourth and last session was co-organised with Oxfam and focused on priorities for meaningful local leadership. Nuria Gollo and a speaker from Myanmar expressed how decision-making and executive power should be handed over to local organisations and that flexible funding, coordination through networks and platforms, and accountability to affected populations are key requirements for this.

KUNO wishes you an inspiring read.

The Collapse of the Liberal World Order: Implications for the Humanitarian System and the Future of Humanitarianism

3 April 2025

Speakers

- **Polly Pallister-Wilkins,** Associate Professor at the University of Amsterdam
- **Lata Narayanaswamy,** Associate Professor at the University of Leeds

2025 has brought to light how much the world order has shifted towards a multipolar direction and how global power relations are shifting. These changes and uncertainties profoundly affect the humanitarian system and, most importantly, the lives of people affected by crises. How can humanitarians think beyond these concerns and explore new ways of working? On 3 April, KUNO organised a lunch meeting to discuss the collapse of the 'liberal world order', its implications for the humanitarian system, and the future of humanitarianism.

Polly Pallister-Wilkins explored the current geopolitical shifts, examining their implications for the field of humanitarianism. She spoke about how the geopolitical landscape is changing rapidly, which is profoundly impacting the humanitarian sector, and is most acutely felt by aid recipients. However, it is not unusual for the humanitarian system to operate in uncertain times, and the fear of a collapse of the liberal world order – including the shrinking humanitarian space - have been a key concern in the sector for decades. At the same time, unprecedented changes are unfolding. This includes a clear lack of outrage from governments and other actors towards violations of international humanitarian law. In addition, the current United States government's explicit acknowledgement that humanitarian action functions as a soft power tool has come as a surprise to many within the sector. In these uncertain times, it is important to be mindful of how critiques of the humanitarian system can be co-opted by political actors in ways that undermine the system's core intentions. Striking a balance between voicing critique while also displaying continued support for the fundamental purpose of the aid system is a difficult, but essential position to maintain.

Polly ended by emphasising that aid recipients and crisis-affected communities need to be at the centre of the discussion on how work should be done in the

humanitarian sector. This moment presents an opportunity to address long-held frustrations, to reconfigure the sector, and to solidify solidarity as the starting point for moving forward.

Lata Narayanaswamy shared insights on the use of language, power structures and the importance of solidarity in the humanitarian system. She explained how foundational to the notion of humanitarianism is the language of crisis. Historically, the term crisis has been used to describe a time-bound event in order to spark a sense of urgency. However, in recent times, the use of the term crisis has become diluted to describe challenges that do not have a clear beginning or end. The lines between urgent humanitarian action and longer-term and political interventions are becoming blurred, which is exacerbated by the collapse of the so-called liberal world order.

Many crises, including the financial crisis and the climate crisis, are the result of decisions made by people and expressions of power. The humanitarian system is not detached from these dynamics. The notion that impartial and neutral actors can operate outside of geopolitical interests has been disproven by many. Elements that resemble 'white saviourism' continue to appear in practice and contribute to reinforcing global inequalities. This raises the question of whether humanitarianism can operate within the realities of the world as it is, rather than the world as we wish it to be. The extreme actions of the current United States government are symptoms, rather than causes, of the failures of the geopolitical system. In reality, humanitarianism is an expression of both hard and soft power and can be used to reproduce colonial power structures. Hard power is visible in the form of controlling financial resources, which is then put towards fulfilling broader Western geopolitical interests. Soft power in humanitarian action often enables donors to present their involvement as driven purely by care and goodwill, which then masks colonial realities. Lata ended by stating that actors in the humanitarian system can – and must – be overtly political to call out and be critical of these realities.

Reflection and discussion

The audience expressed concerns regarding the role of humanitarianism in the current global order. First, a shift towards the far right is occurring in the

political sphere in the Global North. There is a push to keep refugees out of countries, rather than to be in solidarity with them. Second, there is a paradox in how states contribute to humanitarian crises—through actions like arms sales and proxy wars—while simultaneously funding aid programs to address the very crises they help create. Participants noted that the language of aid provision is weaponised by state actors to mask their geopolitical interests. Humanitarianism needs to be overtly political to call out such practices.

The speakers underlined the importance of solidarity in humanitarian action; it should be based on a sense of shared humanity, which is lacking in many cases. In Western contexts, a sense of detachment persists, with crises often viewed as problems faced by people far away, rather than as events that could impact us personally. As a result, humanitarian action is often motivated by a sense of benevolence, rather than true solidarity. This paradigm can be shifted through relatability driven by the realisation that Western states are not immune to threats, such as climate shocks or people losing livelihoods.

There was agreement between the audience and speakers that discussions around solidarity, putting affected populations at the centre, and localisation are not new. In the current geopolitical context, these discussions are amplified. Still, decisions affecting aid recipients continue to be made by Western actors at a distance instead of having direct involvement in these decision-making processes. The fact that the reform agendas have been the topic of discussion for decades means that there is the knowledge available to make a change towards a positive direction. There are organisations that have operationalised locally-led action; however, in many other cases, implementation is still lacking.

Funding Shocks and the Strategic Impact on the Humanitarian System

29 April 2025

Speakers

- **Themrise Khan**, Independent Development Professional and Publicist
- **Arjan Hehenkamp**, Crisis Lead for Sudan at the International Rescue Committee

This year, but also in 2024, many donors announced budget cuts for humanitarian action. The resulting funding shocks affect humanitarian action both immediately and in the long term. Organisations are being forced to stop vital programmes, lay off staff, and reduce their presence in communities, leaving people in need with little to no support. 'Seismic shift', 'humanitarian disaster', or 'opportunity for radical change': these are all perspectives on how the humanitarian system should respond to the current developments. On 29 April, KUNO organised a lunch meeting to discuss funding shocks and the strategic impact on the humanitarian system. Two speakers offered their arguments for necessary and major changes.

Themrise Khan addressed some of the main flaws of the humanitarian system. Themrise claims that the time for humanitarian action, particularly in the broader context of foreign aid, is over. Instead, it is time to come up with a new way of doing things that would reduce dependency on the West. Humanitarian action is part of the broader system of foreign aid, causing it to suffer from similar anomalies regarding power, domination, and control. The humanitarian action sector is becoming more selective about which disasters to assist. The humanitarian system is highly political, and decisions on where to act are political in nature rather than necessarily humanitarian. It is not a matter of underfunding; it is about being selective, even when the number of humanitarian crises around the world is increasing.

Secondly, every country has its own form of humanitarian system, whether formal or informal. Every country has the capacity to assist its people to some extent. In times of crisis, the first responders are usually local citizens. For example, during the catastrophic floods in Pakistan in the summer of 2022, the first responders were villagers helping each other. This ethos needs to be

cultivated and supported. However, in many disasters and crises, international aid agencies often enter the country, take over, and replace these local initiatives.

Thirdly, there needs to be a clearer distinction between development and humanitarian action. Development aid functions more as a soft power tool and invests in, for example, education, health, and more economically centred areas, which technically fall under the responsibility of nation states. In contrast, humanitarianism is altruistic in nature and is disaster and conflict-centred. Their objectives are completely different. In short, while the objective of humanitarian action – saving lives – may seem straightforward, the realities are much more complex. They are morphing into each other. However, the distinction is important.

Arjan Hehenkamp stated that 25 years ago, the combined total of the consolidated humanitarian appeal for the United Nations worldwide was $4 billion. Now – after the funding cuts of 2025 – this is over $40 billion. This demonstrates that over the years, a massive budget increase for humanitarian action has taken place. Alongside the budget, the scope of humanitarian action has drastically increased as well. Looking back to the Cold War era, this explains why this is the case. During the Cold War, The Soviet Union and Western states had significant interests in investing in South Asian and African countries in order to be able to sustain their political interests and their allied states. This interest disappeared after the end of the Cold War. From that moment, the task of providing aid was delegated to multilateral institutions, the United Nations, and NGOs. This system pressured African and Asian states to divest in public service provision towards their population. The NGOs and United Nations stepped into the vacuum left by the lack of interest of Western states and reduced investments in public service provision. Humanitarian action was rapidly expanded, and humanitarian organisations felt that they needed to do more, causing the time frame, scope and geographical reach for humanitarian action to drastically increase. This expansion of humanitarianism is referred to by Hugo Slim as the ‘Humanitarian Christmas Tree’. This analogy refers to the constant addition of ornaments to the tree without ever taking anything off.

Arjan explained that humanitarian action serves a wide range of purposes and is often provided in countries where the government is, in principle, capable of delivering such assistance. Humanitarian action has become 'meaningless' in the sense that it means everything for all people in all situations all the time.

The funding cuts made by the United States government - and other governments like the Netherlands - raise a fundamental question: Can the humanitarian system maintain its forest of Christmas trees, or should action be more focused on situations deemed most necessary? Arjan argues that humanitarian action is most legitimate and effective in situations where there is intense and violent polarisation and contestation of power, and where there is no capacity and will of the government or its institutions to intervene and take care of the well-being of its population. The core purpose of humanitarian action is to address vital, life-saving needs.

The funding cuts present an opportunity to return to the core purpose of humanitarian action. There are three situations where humanitarian action will be effective and legitimate, if only for a short period of time:

1) Situations of active conflict (or intense violence which approximates conflict);
2) Situations of malign neglect when there is deliberate and systematic discrimination of a particular need or particular population;
3) Phases of acute disasters or outbreaks where local capacities are overwhelmed by the disaster.

In other situations, humanitarians should consider which forms of intervention might be more effective, such as debt relief. In response to the funding cuts, many NGOs and other humanitarian actors have had to withdraw from various countries. This leaves the question: what were they doing there in the first place? Arjan ended his address with a clear call not to do less with less, but rather to do more in fewer situations.

Reflection and discussion

The audience raised questions and concerns regarding these changes in

the scope of the humanitarian system. First, given the complexity of the humanitarian ecosystem, how can its infrastructure and governance be adapted to implement these changes? It is extremely difficult for international bodies or organisations to change their governance, since this is political and bureaucratic in nature. The key question is not how to restructure. Instead, it should be asked whether these organisations actually belong on the ground in the first place. This will dictate whether their governance structure needs to be changed. The decisions on where to focus efforts should, ideally, be made by the countries most at risk of humanitarian crises. In reality, it is often donors who make these decisions. To change this, NGOs would need to change their funding models to get more unrestricted funding not tied to specific objectives or regions.

Themrise added to the discussion that the nexus was not realistic in the first place. A strong development sector is needed—one that also supports or enables the country to build a humanitarian system. They do not need to co-exist as their objectives do not necessarily align.

Participants commented on the distinction between development aid and lifesaving aid, and the difficulty of refocusing humanitarian action. South Sudan, for example, has a non-functioning government and faces recurring humanitarian crises and prolonged displacement. Talking with affected populations shows that they need livelihood support rather than, for example, plastic sheets. The government is not—and is unlikely to—meet the needs of its population, and development actors are not present in many areas. Similarly, Yemen is experiencing a protracted humanitarian crisis, and the government is not meeting the livelihood needs of its population. This raises a critical question: what should the role of humanitarian actors be in such situations, and is it possible to refocus solely on life-saving assistance?

In response, it was argued that humanitarian action cannot address the root causes of crises and may therefore not be the appropriate response in such situations. Humanitarian action is put in an impossible position: if we try to make it the answer, we make it something that it is not.

Gulf Rush? Opportunities for Diversification and Challenges in Making it Work

13 May 2025

Speakers

- **Yannick du Pont**, Development Committee member at the Netherlands Advisory Council on International Affairs, Advisor for Glocalshift and Board Member of Dihad
- **Mohamed Skaik**, Gulf Cooperation Council Partnerships Director, and active with Glocalshift

The international humanitarian sector is facing a turning point. The collapse of USAID funding, combined with structural budget cuts by several European governments, has created an unprecedented challenge. Business as usual is no longer an option; new markets need to be explored. One promising emerging donor region is the Gulf Cooperation Council states. The United Nations, several (mostly US-based) international NGOs, and the International Committee of the Red Cross have been working with partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council for decades. The Dutch development and humanitarian sectors, however, have been slow or absent in exploring these opportunities. On 13 May, KUNO organised a lunch meeting on the challenges and opportunities for exploring partnership with the Gulf Cooperation Council states in the humanitarian sector.

Yannick du Pont discussed key developments in the field of humanitarian partnerships with the Gulf states and the underlying rationale for these collaborations. For decades, Western actors have had reservations about working with Gulf states, due to concerns about human rights and uncertainty about the origin of funds. While these are legitimate concerns, pragmatic and tailored approaches have been developed in finding partnerships with Gulf states. This is reflected in the growing acceptance of funding from the Gulf region by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, both of which are known for their rigorous due diligence in choosing partners. In addition, another major change occurred in early 2022 when the European Commission published a policy paper called 'The European Union strategic partnership with the Gulf'. The European Union had come to the realisation – after the Russian invasion in Ukraine – that it needed to strengthen its partnerships with the

Gulf. In short, where such partnerships were once met with scepticism, a shift is occurring whereby these partnerships are increasingly accepted.

Forming partnerships with Gulf states can be complex as it requires careful consideration of the internal dynamics of the Gulf Cooperation Council and rivalry among member states – working with a specific Gulf state could make working with another more difficult. While the war in Gaza has created more unity within the Gulf, these dynamics still play a role beneath the surface. The Gaza war has also made Gulf states more hesitant to choose European partners, particularly because some European countries' positions on the conflict do not align with their own. The Netherlands has not prioritised partnerships with the Gulf states. Other European states, such as Switzerland and Norway, are much ahead in this regard.

Yannick closed with a call to the humanitarian field and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mobilise in order to make the Netherlands a more prominent partner. Partnership with Gulf states has much to offer. For many (humanitarian) actors, the initial reaction to such a partnership is that it would be financially beneficial, especially in light of current extensive budget cuts. However, the main impact is not financial but rather improved access to difficult crisis zones. For example, it was possible for certain organisations to register in eastern Libya in eight days due to a partnership with the Islamic Development Bank, whereas this took other European-based organisations up to two years.

According to Mohamed Skaik, it is not advisable to seek partnership with Gulf states solely for financial motives. If, however, an organisation seeks other added values, such as expansion of operations and increased reach within countries, it is recommended to think of such partnerships. How can partnerships be built? In the initial phases of building partnerships, it is crucial to be patient, as the narratives and strategies of European organisations are often not wholly aligned with those of their Gulf counterparts. It is not only a question of what European actors want or need. It is equally important to consider what European actors can offer Gulf counterparts, and to be responsive to their ways of working, preferences, and needs in order to build successful partnerships. This requires extensive communication, trust-building and transparency.

There are certain elements and topics to consider when seeking partnerships. Firstly, localisation is an important topic for many Gulf states. There is a concern that Western parties will enter a country, become the main implementing partner during a crisis, only to leave as soon as a project is finished. Therefore, choosing and working with local partners that are compatible with the Gulf states is crucial for Western humanitarian organisations. This way, the local partners can take the lead on local development once a project has finished. Secondly, Western organisations need to consider what the added value of working with them would be for Gulf states, such as quality implementation, capacity building of local partners, providing support to beneficiaries, what networks they bring, etc. This is important because there is increasing competition for partnerships with the Gulf states organisations from the West, the East, and also the United Nations. Thirdly, organisations need to be aware and mindful of cultural and religious sensitivities within local contexts. This would build trust, which in turn opens new doors, such as possibly becoming a de facto strategic partner for specific activities, or in specific countries. Funding is not allocated through tenders; partnership building is the key approach. Lastly, partnership should not be framed merely as a funding mechanism, but as a broader, collaborative relationship on topics such as sharing expertise and networks, or gaining access in certain difficult contexts.

Reflection and discussion

The audience raised the question of how Gulf states perceive working with INGOs. On the one hand, it is often recognised that INGOs have useful networks in Europe and the ability to influence policy in the West on topics such as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. On the other hand, there is a negative perception of INGOs in terms of often having a redundant middleman or allocating a large share of funding to headquarter salaries. This also relates to localisation; Gulf states will not simply give funds to international organisations if they are not perceived well by local partners and they do not have true localisation policies.

A question was raised about how to collaborate with Gulf states, given concerns around security, limited development funding, and cultural incompatibilities. It was argued that the time has passed for considering cultural incompatibilities as a barrier to cooperation. Existing collaborations demonstrate that alignment

of values and core missions between Western and Gulf counterparts is possible. For example, Glocalshift chose to align with the values of the Gulf Cooperation Council because the Council was often more understanding of local needs.

When organisations seek partnership opportunities with the Gulf, it is important to adopt strategic approaches in light of the increased competition for such cooperation. The speakers emphasised that the Dutch sector would benefit from coordinated approaches, working together with the Dutch government and creating a profile as a unit. Other countries such as Switzerland, Germany and France are far ahead of the Netherlands in this regard, which makes them more appealing partners. In addition to the Gulf Cooperation Council, INGOs can take into account other regional cooperation frameworks and actors operating in the Middle East. While the Arab League is not seen as operationally active or very influential, the Islamic Development Bank is important for the humanitarian sector, as it is highly influential, is a neutral body to work with, and has non-partisan funds available.

Aid funding from the Gulf Cooperation Council is allocated across various areas, including infrastructure, development, and humanitarian assistance. It can be unclear to Western actors what the specific division is and how this has been decided upon. However, this should not be a barrier to cooperation. Aligning with the Gulf Cooperation Council's funding priorities is advisable, as these allocations are based on a strong understanding of local needs and available capacities, supported by thorough planning. For example, Gulf states deployed aid trucks to Syria from Türkiye in less than 24 hours, after the catastrophic earthquake in 2023. Much of the international response came a month later. This example demonstrates that, in various cases, Gulf states are significantly ahead of Western organisations. Particularly in the current political climate—marked by funding cuts to humanitarian action—INGOs are no longer always in the lead. Significant benefits can be gained from partnering with Gulf Cooperation Council states that go beyond purely financial considerations.

Priorities for Meaningful Local Humanitarian Leadership

27 May 2025

Speakers

- **Nuria Gollo**, Executive Director of MWADO (a women's rights organisation) and Chair of the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) in Kenya
- Local Intermediary Actor Network representative in Myanmar

While the sector is buzzing with conversations on 'the humanitarian reset', 'radical change', and 'new humanitarianism', questions arise about what exactly is being reset and who is meaningfully involved in reimagining and shaping the sector's future. In a joint statement from April 2025, civil society representatives and networks emphasise the need to move beyond small fixes. Instead, they call for a bold, principled transformation that shifts power, resources, and decision-making to local and national actors who are closest to the communities we aim to support, accelerating the slow progress made in the decade since the World Humanitarian Summit. While it's clear that meaningful transformation will have to be grounded in frontline realities, conversations and consultations on the reset continue to largely centre around voices in New York, Geneva and other capital cities. On 27 May, KUNO and Oxfam organised a lunch meeting to discuss priorities for a truly inclusive, locally led, and fit-for-purpose humanitarian system.

A Local Intermediary Actor Network (LIA)-representative in Myanmar, started by sharing perspectives of local actors on the humanitarian reset. Local humanitarian actors and civil society organisations welcome current initiatives on resetting the humanitarian system and architecture, aiming at shifting power, promoting equal partnerships while ensuring accountability and transparency. These initiatives are necessary because local actors have a better understanding of local contexts, have easier access to affected communities, and are trusted by these communities. Myanmar faces a complex operational space due to the compounding effects of climate shocks and protracted armed conflict. To navigate this complex space, where international actors have limited access and much of the response has been left to local actors, local NGOs formed the Local Intermediary Network, which facilitates collective advocacy for promoting localisation, coordination and networking among local and national organisations.

Certain key messages from consultations with local humanitarian actors and civil society organisations have come forward. Firstly, the reset must lead to fundamental changes in longstanding power structures that have contributed to exclusion, inefficiency and lack of accountability to crisis-affected people. Secondly, the humanitarian system needs to become more inclusive, promote local leadership while building on the needs of local communities. Thirdly, there needs to be more focus on quality and multi-year, flexible funding. Lastly, organisations call for greater accountability in order to implement the Grand Bargain Commitments. In addition, country-based pooled funds are in general perceived as a good strategy, but should diversify beyond the OCHA-managed funds, and local and national actors should become the primary recipients of these funds and simplified and harmonised due diligence requirements should be promoted. The transformation of the humanitarian system cannot be imposed from above; it must be shaped and led by those closest to the challenges.

Nuria Gollo shared experiences and success stories of localisation in Kenya. ASAL Humanitarian Network consists of over thirty local and national NGOs and aims to amplify local voices in effective humanitarian action by facilitating capacity-sharing amongst members, deployment of rapid response teams, influencing national and county policymaking, among other activities. An important priority area for the ASAL Humanitarian Network is localisation and partnership readiness, promoted through local leadership, capacity-sharing, and due diligence. Another key area of focus is advocacy and coordination on issues such as climate justice, overhead funding, partnerships with the United Nations and international NGOs, and the decentralisation of disaster funds to the county level. Thirdly, through multi-stakeholder engagement with the government, the United Nations, international NGOs, and various platforms, the Network aims to facilitate more effective humanitarian action.

The ASAL Humanitarian Network includes a women's caucus. Out of the thirty organisations that are currently part of the Network, ten are women-led. This women's caucus is a transformative initiative that amplifies women's voices and leadership in humanitarian action. The caucus influences county and national policy by contributing to gender-sensitive programming and planning,

while also serving as a safe space for women who have faced exclusion in humanitarian action.

The primary recommendation of the Network is to make funding for local actors flexible, long-term, and predictable, including overhead and indirect costs. Additionally, more decision-making power should be granted to local actors, considering that these actors are not merely participants but first responders in times of crisis. Nuria concluded her address with a call for action to donors and international NGOs. They must ensure joint decision-making with local and national partners, support local platforms that are rooted in communities and are driving systemic change, invest in co-creation spaces and humanitarian innovation led by local partners, and to support locally-led pooled funds to ensure a steady and dedicated flow of funding to local actors.

Reflection and discussion

The audience raised the question of how to simplify and harmonise due diligence requirements when working with local actors, as this is something that local partners advocate for. In the context of Myanmar, it is difficult to work with the current due diligence and compliance requirements as a local actor. For example, local actors are required to carry hard copies of documents, which can put them at risk due to the protracted armed conflict. The Myanmar Humanitarian Country Team is developing flexibility guidelines. During this process, local actors have had the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges in implementing programmes on the ground, as well as offer suggestions for reducing the risks they face. These guidelines will be implemented in Myanmar and can be shared with actors in other countries if successful.

More time was spent talking about the role that the women's caucus of the ASAL Humanitarian Network has had in shaping the humanitarian sector in Kenya. In most counties in Kenya, the caucus drives a gender-technical working group, which influences policy spaces at both county and the national level. In addition, the caucus provides a safe space for women's mentorship, leadership, and solidarity. This safe space helps women maintain a collective voice even when working in different countries. In addition, the caucus enables access to resources during a crisis for women-led organisations.

In addition, participants asked about the outlook of national and local actors on the prospects of quality funding. The speakers shared the experience that local actors often receive short-term - four to eight months - funding. Such short-term funding is insufficient for local organisations to operate effectively. Local organisations do not receive multi-year funding to cover both overhead and indirect costs. Therefore, once a project stops, the civil society organisation ceases to operate entirely and/or loses key staff and expertise.

Summary reports
Lunch meetings organised by KUNO

Session 1

Date: 3 April 2025

Title: *The Collapse of the Liberal World Order: Implications for the Humanitarian System and the Future of Humanitarianism*

Speakers: Polly Pallister-Wilkins and Lata Narayanaswamy

Session 2

Date: 29 April 2025

Title: *Funding Shocks and the Strategic Impact on the Humanitarian System*

Speakers: Arjan Hehenkamp and Themrise Khan

Session 3

Date: 13 May 2025

Title: *Gulf Rush? Opportunities for Diversification and Challenges in Making It Work*

Speakers: Mohamed Skaik and Yannick du Pont

Session 4

Date: 27 May 2025

Title: *Priorities for Meaningful Local Humanitarian Leadership*

Speakers: Nuria Gollo and a representative of the Local Intermediary Actor Network

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