

# **WHO Conference on Health Aspects of Tsunami Disaster in Asia**

## **Policy and Coordination**

**Richard Garfield, RN, DrPH  
Columbia University**



# Models and Lessons

- **Disasters:**

Orissa SuperCyclone and Floods

Bam Earthquake 2003

Gujarat Earthquake 2001

- **Multilateral Evaluations:**

Hurricane Mitch, Central America 1998

Great Lakes Region, Africa 2003

- **Asian Financial Crisis 1997 -**



# Major Lessons

- **Much Assistance Which is Too Late to be Effective**  
**Ex: Surgical Supplies Arrive After Surgeries are Finished**
- **More Competition than Coordination Among UN Agencies**
- **No Lead Agency or Other Agencies Unwilling to be Led**
- **Actions were Donor Driven, Rather than Need, Driven**
- **Many NGOs, Much Overlap, Limited Relevant Expertise**
- **Internationals Doing Some Jobs Better Done by Locals**
- **Recovery, Resilience, and Preparedness Depends on Developing Local Capacity**
- **More Accountable to Donors than Beneficiaries**



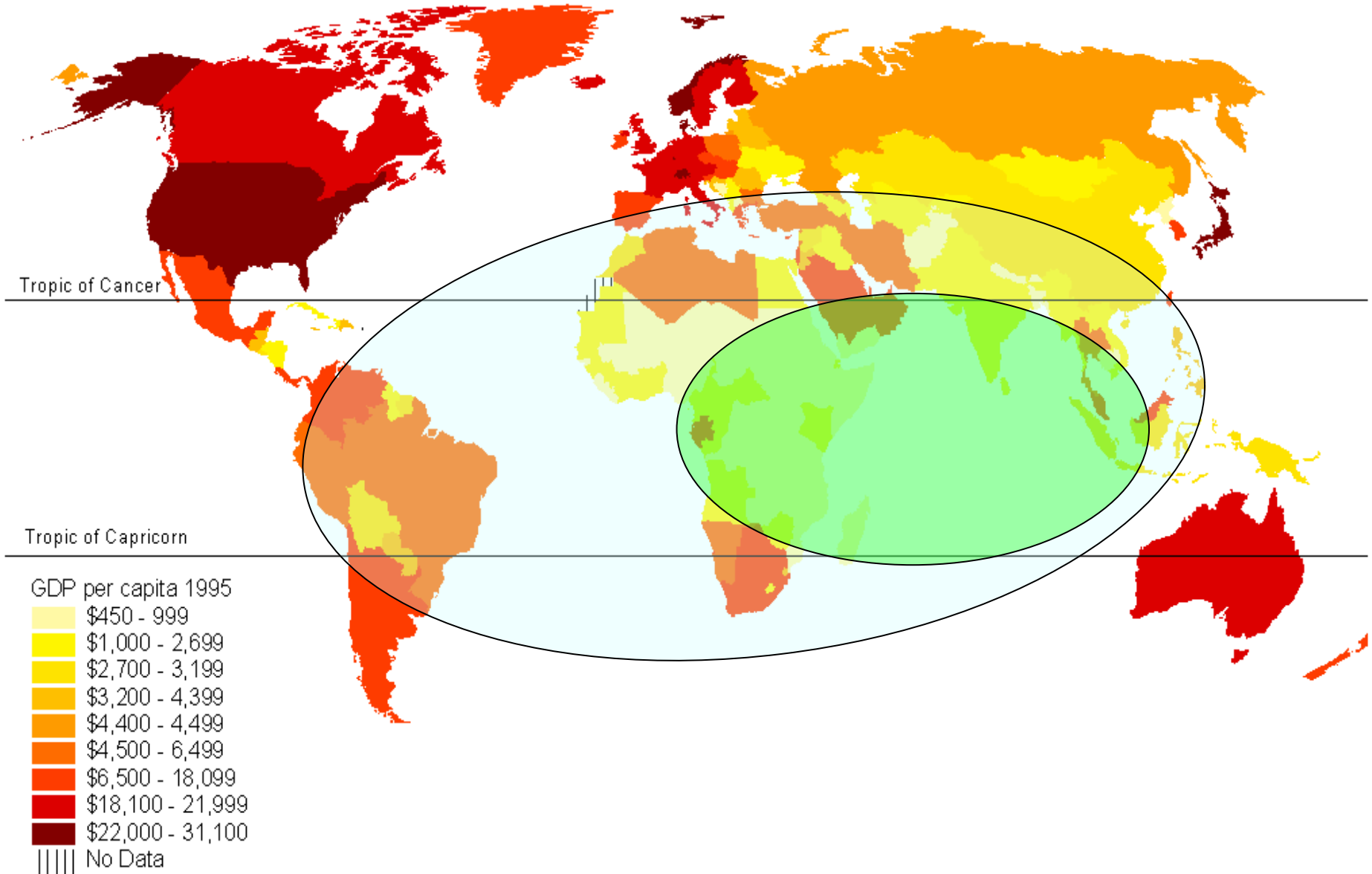
# UN Relations With Local Authorities

- **UN Effectiveness Limited Where No Government or Governance Under Duress**
- **In Such Situations, Need for Peacekeeping or Peace Enforcement**
- **Ambivalent Relations Between Humanitarian and Security Roles**
- **Humanitarian Space Further Constrained post 9/11, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq**

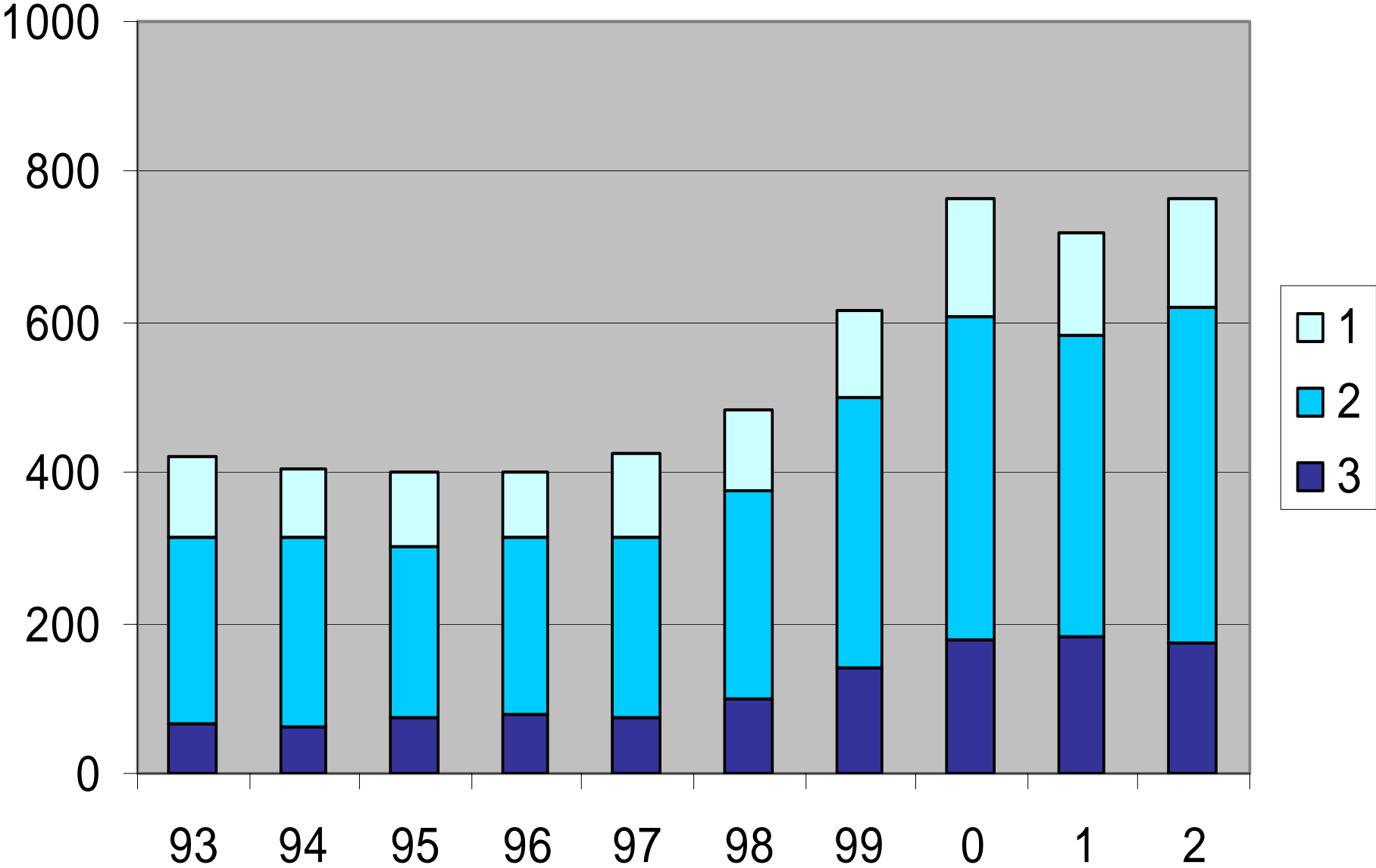


# Vulnerabilities, Needs, and Abilities Vary

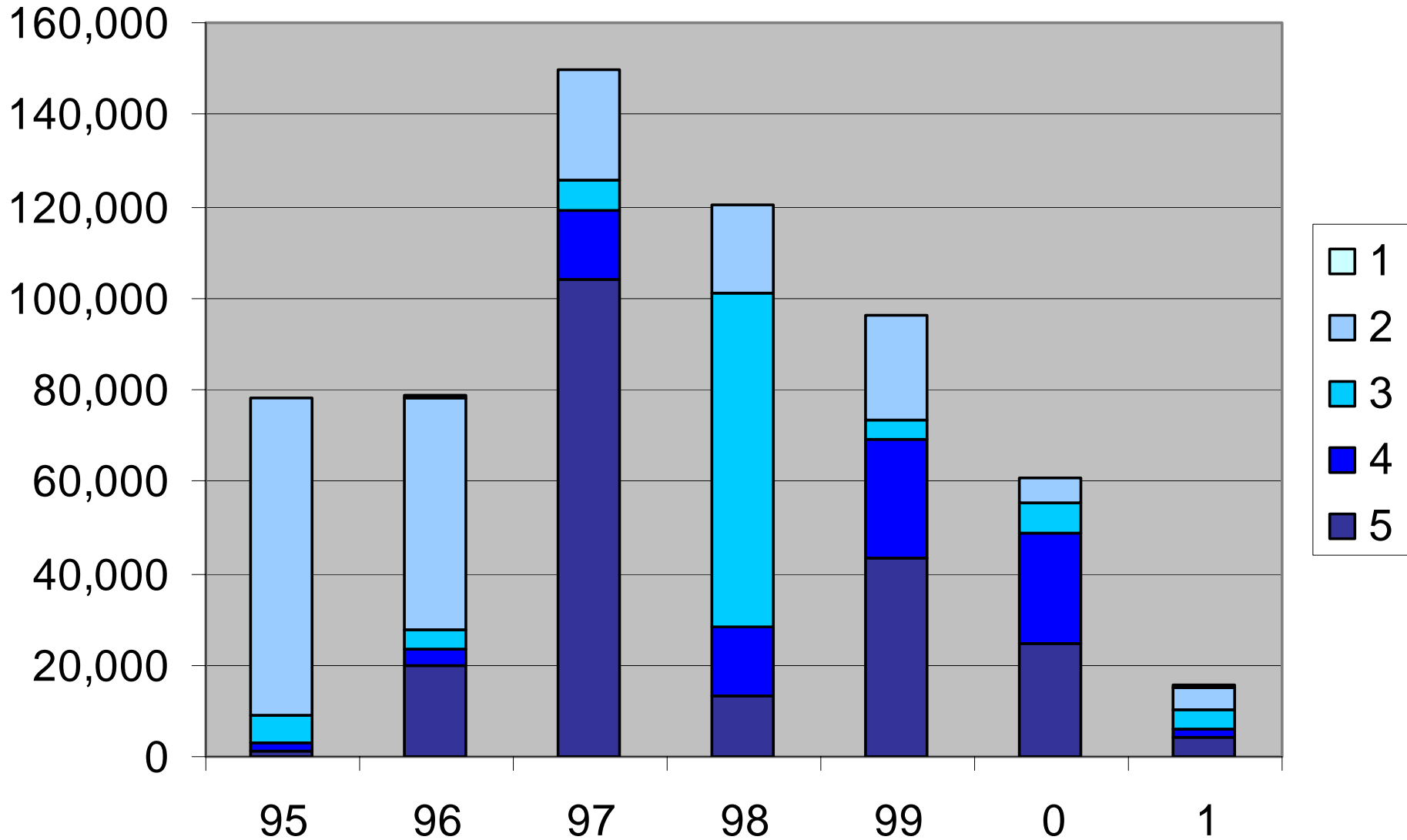
GDP per capita 1995



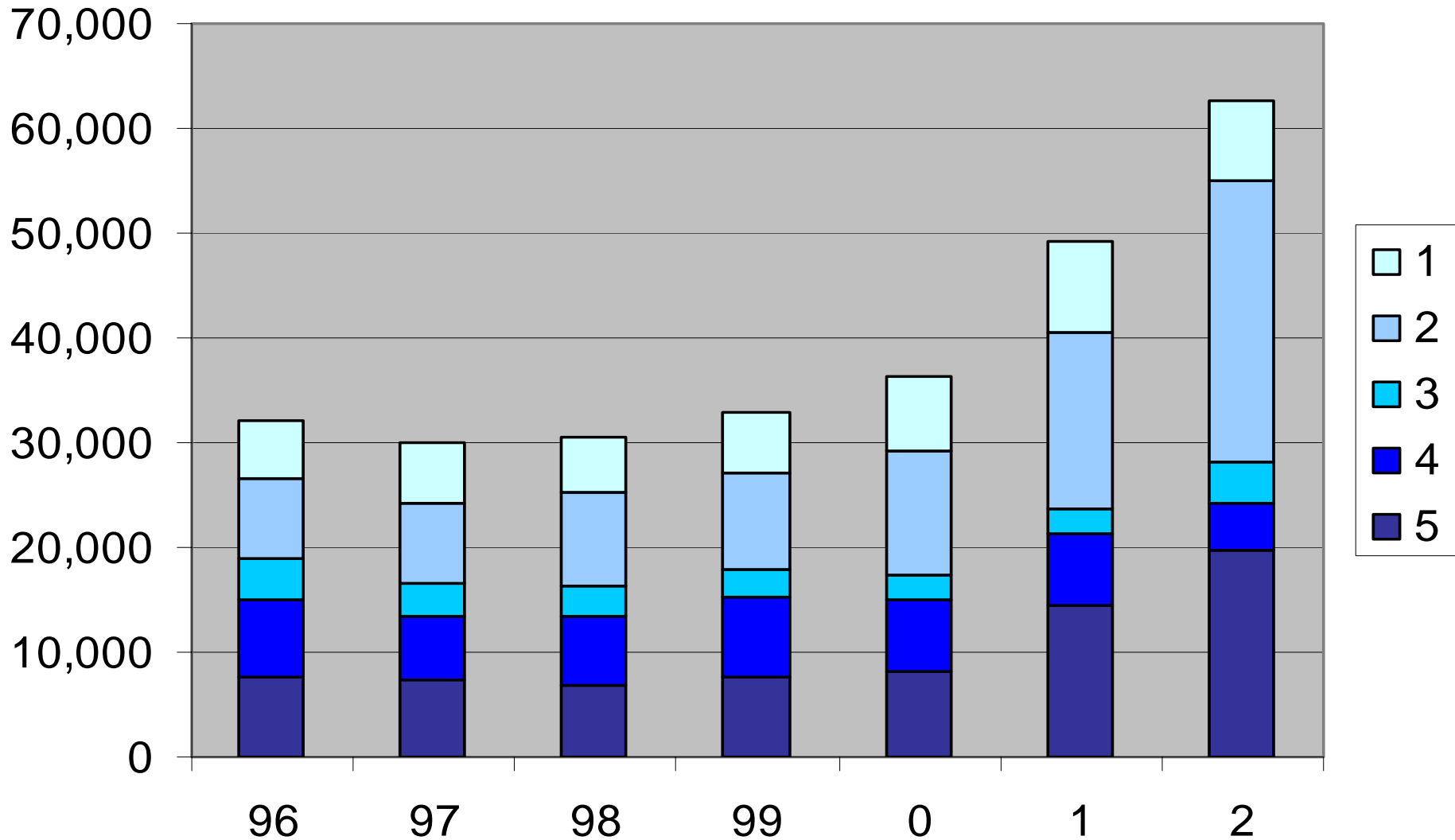
# Reported Disasters, 1993 – 2002, by HDI Level



# Number of People Killed in Conflicts, 1995-2001, by HDI Level, In thousands



# Number of Displaced People and Refugees, 1996 – 2002 by HDI Level, In thousands



# What is Policy

- **Define Needs**
- **Set Goals**
- **Prioritize and Coordinate Actions**
- **Monitor Resource Allocation**
- **Analyze Impact**
- **Establish Accountability**



# What is Coordination

- **Allocate Tasks to Maximize Complimentarity**
- **Harmonize Procedures**
- **Produce Relevant Information**
- **Plan Strategies**
- **Manage Information**
- **Balance Focus on Relief, Recovery, and Development**



# The Problems

- **Planning should be strategic, usually is contingent**
- **Data is usually not relevant, timely, agreed upon, used, or turned into information useful for action**
- **Accountable to whom?**



- In health, we know how to collect and analyze disease data. We create rates for events and measure rate changes. We know if something has changed and can often track the impact of our actions.
  
- With rare geophysical phenomena, it is much harder to know if we prevented or mitigated something.



**While devotees at the shrine of coordination are legion....there is little understanding of why the effective orchestration of their activities proves so difficult.”**

Larry Minear, *Learning the Lessons*



- **Approach every crisis as unique**
- **Action-oriented nature**
- **Inadequate authority to command**
- **Feast and famine in funding**
- **Defensiveness toward criticism**
- **Self-evaluated**
- **Lack of accountability**



# Community Development Approach



World Health  
Organization

- Usually Top-Down

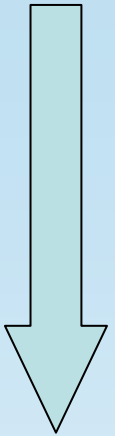
In Emergency

When Technology Highly Specialized

When no Local Authority to Coordinate With

When Security Poor

In Camp Situation



- Moving to Bottom-Up

In Recovery and Development

With Community Resources

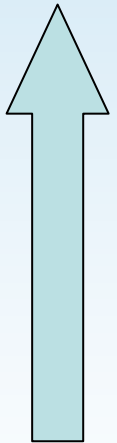
In Stable Situations

Where Ample Capacity

With large Settled Populations

**Needed Here!**

**- Coordination**



**World Health  
Organization**

- **More Top Down**

Mass Casualties

Surveillance

Forensics

- **More Bottom-Up**

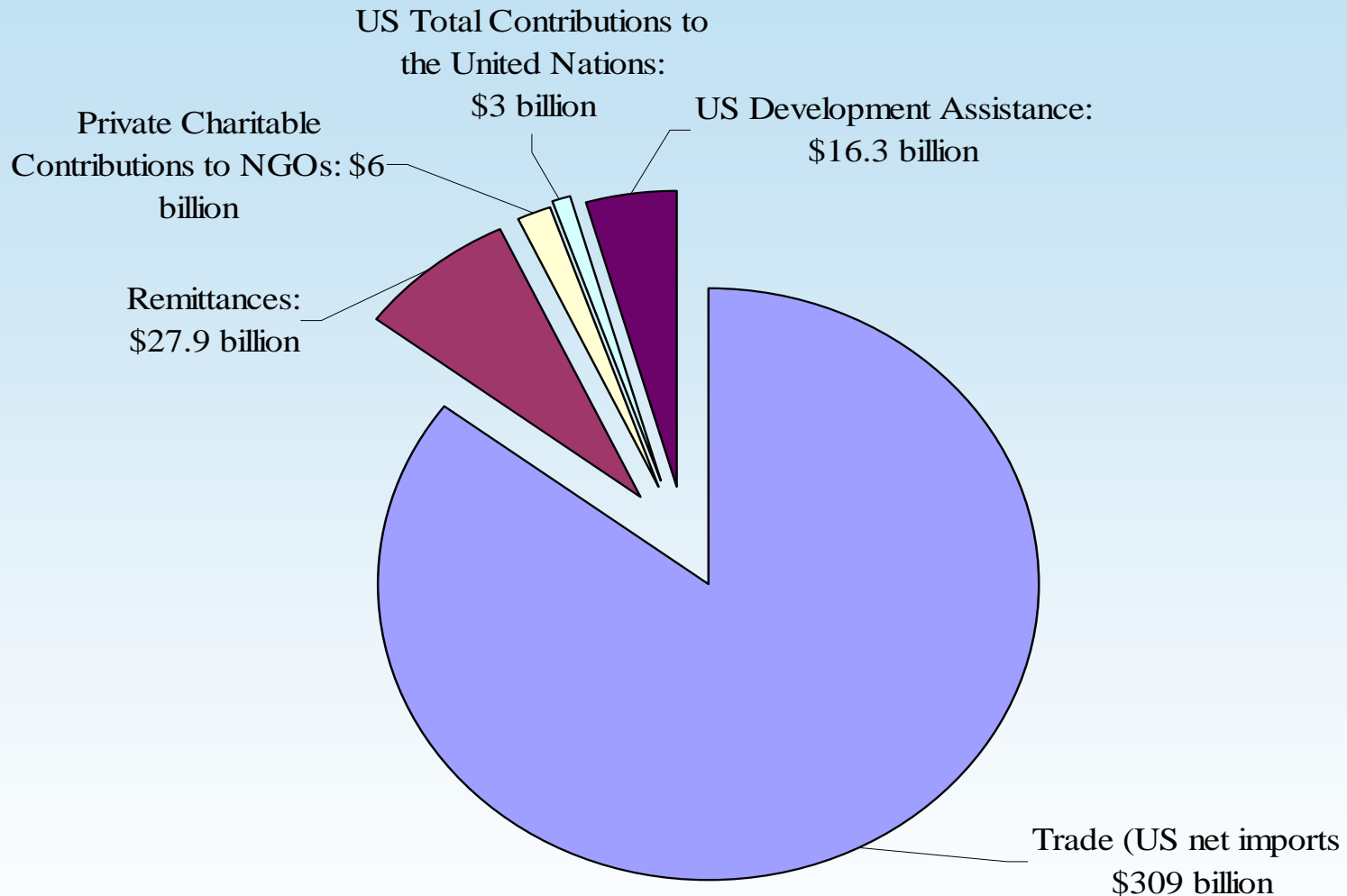
Recovery of Health Systems

Strengthening Health Worker Capacity

Disaster Reduction



# Trade and Development Assistance (2003)



# Tools for Coordination

- Principles of Engagement
- Protocols for Assumption of Responsibility
- Minimum Data Set for Monitoring
- Health Sector Component Summaries
- GIS Systems Coordination
- Surveillance and Monitoring Data Systems



# The Future

- **More Geothermal Events, Rising Sea Levels**
- **Rapid Urbanization in Marginal Areas**
- **Economic Growth without Urban Planning**



- “Most of all, if gains in health and nutrition during emergencies are to be sustained, graduates need to understand the importance of capacity building of national staff and institutions. The changing nature and focus of complex emergencies from short-term emergencies in refugee camps to prolonged emergencies in large geographical areas needs a profound shift in focus.”

Salama et al,

*Lessons Learned from Complex Emergencies*

