The Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) is an alliance of major international humanitarian organisations aiming to support increased quality, accountability and learning within the humanitarian sector. To this end it used a peer review process, with three main objectives:

* To understand the range and diversity of approaches to accountability to disaster-affected persons;
* To share best practices, challenges, and learning within and between members in taking forward the adoption, integration and use of different approaches to accountability, and their relative effectiveness and practicality;
* To inform decisions about whether and how best to prioritise and integrate the diversity of accountability approaches in our organisations and the humanitarian sector.

The SCHR model of the peer review has been adapted from the OECD model, most notably with the inclusion of an external consultant component to provide rigour, comparability and coherence. It is based on a combination of self-assessment by each organisation, document review and interviews/group discussions. Two country visits were conducted for each organisation. UNHCR – not an SCHR member - was invited to join the process owing to a shared concern to do more to demonstrate the centrality of disaster-affected persons in humanitarian response.

Although each organisation embarked on the peer review from a different starting position, there are several aspects of accountability that resonate with all 9 participants:

* Acknowledging, making visible and diminishing the power imbalance between organisations and disaster-affected persons
* Involving affected persons meaningfully in key decisions and processes that influence their lives
* Building relationships with affected persons that are characterised by dignity and respect
* Sharing relevant information and communicating transparently (providing feedback to disaster-affected persons as well as consulting them)
* Behaving with integrity, keeping to commitments made and engendering trust.

This paper provides an overview of some of the key lessons that emerged from the peer review process.