



Connecting Business

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Core Responsibility Five of the Agenda for Humanity



“Through the Connecting Business Initiative we can be part of creating the international best practice to put people at the centre and help new countries to join this effort.”

**Butch Meily, President,
Philippine Disaster
Resilience Foundation**

I. Overview

The purpose of this special session was to officially launch the [Connecting Business initiative](#) and to gather commitments and support to the initiative.

Throughout the WHS consultation process, businesses and humanitarian actors called for the creation of structures at national and regional levels and amongst industry groups to effectively mobilize and coordinate private sector engagement.

The WHS Synthesis report recommended the establishment of a global coordination mechanism to facilitate effective engagement by businesses in humanitarian action and foster innovation. The mechanism, it proposed, should serve to connect business networks to each other and to other humanitarian actors through a clear entry point in disaster risk reduction, emergency response and recovery issues. Similar recommendations were made by the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing.

As a response to the demands described above, and with reference to Core Responsibility 4 of the Agenda for Humanity - Changing people's lives: from delivering aid to ending need, OCHA, UNISDR and UNDP launched the Connecting Business initiative.

II. Key outcomes/themes

The Connecting Business initiative is expected to facilitate private sector engagement in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery. It will bring together national private sector actors, including SMEs, as well as multinational corporations with other stakeholders including Governments and the humanitarian community.

Representatives of national networks committed or announced¹ the following:

- The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation committed to working with the initiative to: strengthen and increase the effectiveness of private sector engagement in disaster risk management and response in the Philippines; support the creation and strengthening of private sector networks in Fiji, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and other locations; support the creation of a Asian regional private sector network for resilience, response and recovery.
- The Pacific Island Private Sector Organization, and the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation expressed the intention to set up a Fiji Business Resilience Council and to extend to other Pacific countries with Fiji being the regional hub and linking to the global portal.
- The Madagascar Private Sector Humanitarian Platform, with the Telma Foundation, committed to support the creation and strengthening of national private sector led networks in the Africa region and committed to partnering with Connecting Business to support the creation of an Africa regional private sector network.
- On behalf of partners in Sri Lanka, Capital Maharaja announced the formation of an Alliance for Disaster Risk Management and to work with the Connecting Business initiative to build and implement a multi-sectoral mechanism.
- The East Africa Humanitarian Private Sector Partnership Platform (HPPP) announced their intention to work with the initiative to strengthen its efforts to build the capacity of businesses in East Africa to withstand and recover from crises, and to contribute to alleviating the humanitarian impact of crises.

Representatives from the private sector committed or announced the following:

- The UPS Foundation announced expanding their work in this area in two ways: 1) partner with Connecting Business to establish a private sector-led network for Turkey and the MENA region; and 2) to replicate the program in Mexico and Central America with Connecting Business and other private sector organizations. UPS has already provided funding to the initiative and committed to continuing their engagement at the highest level.
- The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation announced that they would provide funding of 300 000 USD for the Connecting Business Initiative, thereby joining the Executive Committee.

¹ Most of the announcements highlighted in this section were made verbally at the Summit. Commitments that were submitted in writing can be found online at: www.agendaforhumanity.org

- Other private sector that announced support to the initiative include Ericsson, Deloitte, DPDHL, Salesforce, Hewlett Packard, International Chamber of Commerce, Henry Schein and Vantage Partners.

Governments committed or announced the following:

- Fiji announced the joining of forces between the Government, the UN and civil society organisations to establish the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council.
- Australia announced its in-principle support to establish a Pacific network and that it could be in a position to announce funding and program commitments in the coming months.
- Belgium committed to join this initiative and announced funding of 270 000 euro to support its actions.
- Turkey announced funding and support for the Executive Committee and committed to support a private sector network in Turkey as well as a private sector hub for the region in Istanbul.
- Finland announced support to the initiative and announced support from Nokia Corporation. They also expressed an intention to gear development aid instruments towards the goals of Connecting Business and to explore broadening financing mechanisms to enhance partnerships.

UN and civil society organisations announced the following:

- UN Global Compact announced three areas for collaboration: 1) At country level, to support CBI through their Local Networks. 2) Ensure that the UN-Business Hub complements and reinforces the Global Portal. 3) Encourage Networks and corporate signatories to report contributions to humanitarian action.
- The IFRC One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC) announced that it will join the Executive Committee of the Connecting Business initiative, with a Connecting Business representative joining the IBC Global Steering Committee.
- World Vision announced that it would partner with the initiative to promote partnership platforms, facilitate learning and promoting collaboration and co-creation of projects.
- UNICEF expressed support for the Initiative as a platform to facilitate coordination of private sector engagement in humanitarian action.

III. Way Forward

With the launch and the formal support announced and committed the Connecting Business will proceed to establish the Executive committee and its supporting secretariat. It will start implementing agreed upon actions and will continue working with new and existing partners according to a work plan to be endorsed by the

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Executive Committee.

IV. Speakers

Moderator:

- Ms. Barçın Yinanç, Hürriyet Daily News

Co-chairs:

- Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme
- Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Response and Emergency Relief Coordinator
- Dr. Robert Glasser, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Speakers:

- Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation
- UPS Foundation, USA
- Government of Fiji
- Pacific Island Private Sector Organization
- Government of Australia
- UN Global Compact
- IFRC
- Government of Belgium
- AFAD, Turkey
- Hilton Foundation
- Telma, Madagascar
- Capital Maharaja, Sri Lanka
- CEBQ, Haiti
- Equity Bank, Kenya
- World Vision International
- Government of Finland
- UNICEF