

Mr. Ade Daramy, WHS Announcement Plenary speech

'Say no to the status quo' - collaborative working in the future delivery of Humanitarian Action

In reference to this summit, the UN Secretary General, speaking in April this year, said:

"History will judge us by how we use this moment," Mr. Ban urged States to "come to Istanbul at the highest level and to show leadership on the great challenges of the 21st century."

That is the challenge we must rise to.

No individual or group can claim to speak for all Diasporas but we often find we are seeking to deliver the same things to our respective communities, facing the same hurdles in dealing with the seemingly unreachable international agencies engaged in this work.

As representatives of the diaspora, we view the World Humanitarian Summit as an unprecedented opportunity to put our case to world leaders and opinion-formers. Not as 'observers' or a token presence but as an integral component of and as equals in responding to humanitarian issues. **We may take different roads but we want to get to the same destination.**

We cannot leave this summit with the status quo intact. There should be no 'Google-like' dominant presence in the delivery of humanitarian work.

In the consultations culminating in the summit, there has been significant emphasis on partnership. This is where the diaspora comes in. We don't want to just talk about partnership and working together but use this opportunity to set out how we are going to do so: **we have to leave here resolving to turn our words into actions.**

Among one of the reasons for why the Diaspora has traditionally been 'kept outside' of the discourse is that the very thing that we see as a strength – our informal, sometimes ad hoc structures are seen as barriers by our would-be partners, who greatly value and choose to work within defined structures and formal systems.

Sometimes, these barriers are not only rigid, they are opaque. Even when we want to reach you, we often don't know how. To be fair, we realize that the same difficulty applies to conventional actors wanting to reach diaspora. But is it really beyond our abilities to find out how, together, we can overcome these obstacles? They need not be insurmountable.

We want to cooperate – and in seeking cooperation, we are not talking about being co-opted into the already existing system. We are genuinely offering cooperation, as co-option will see us lose the unique perspectives we can bring to the table. Put simply, **we don't want to be you and you can't be us. Nevertheless, we are striving towards a common goal.**

We are offering practical solutions for how this can be achieved.

We bring skills, innovations that larger organisations would not think about, inside knowledge, commitment based on being connected and most importantly, in many cases, we were already there

– wherever ‘there’ is – before there was a crisis. If need be, we can provide examples from every Diaspora.

A pared-down summary of diaspora proposals

- As Diaspora actors, we commit to engage in research and other activities that produce documented knowledge that qualifies humanitarian programming and response and influences policy. We will undertake to explore methods of cooperating ‘across Diasporas’, sharing case studies and best practices around humanitarian responses.
- As Diaspora actors, we commit to support the establishment of an independent diaspora coordination body that facilitates concrete cooperation between diaspora organisations and the wider humanitarian community – to provide a feasible answer to the question “if I want to talk to diaspora, who do I talk to?”

As diaspora actors, we also commit to work in close cooperation with local partners in order to reinforce, not replace, national response systems – because first and foremost, **as fellow humanitarians working to support affected communities, we must remember that we should be collaborators, not competitors. The diasporas are ready. Are you?**

Ade Daramy (SLUKDERT)