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REGIONAL CONSULTATION EUROPE AND OTHERS GROUP BUDAPEST, 3-4 FEBRUARY 2015

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

The World Humanitarian Summit regional consultation for the Europe and Others group was held in Budapest, Hungary on 3-4 February 2015. It was co-chaired by the Governments of Hungary and Finland (co-hosts), the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In the spirit of the summit process' multi-stakeholder approach, the consultation brought together some 250 participants (making it the largest regional consultation to date) from the 'Europe and others' region,¹ representing Member States; affected people; local, regional and international civil society organizations; the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; national and international NGOs; United Nations agencies and other international organizations; regional organizations; diaspora organizations; the private sector; and academic institutions. In addition, the Government of Jordan, which will co-host the regional consultation for the Middle East and North Africa in Amman in March 2015, attended as observer.

¹ The WHS 'Europe and others' grouping includes: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

The meeting was preceded by preparatory consultations with stakeholders representing their wider constituencies. Stakeholder consultations in the region will continue and will feed into the overall Summit process. The consultation in Budapest was organized around the four themes of the Summit: humanitarian effectiveness, reducing vulnerability and managing risk, transformation through innovation, and serving the needs of people in conflict.

There was a strong consensus among the participants on the importance of addressing the complexities that arise when serving the needs of people in conflict.

The rich discussions in sub-groups led to a series of conclusions, among which the following key considerations emerged:

- Strong emphasis on maintaining focus on affected populations.
- Recognition of the primary responsibility of governments as duty-bearers to protect their populations.
- In conflict, the primary legal framework remains international humanitarian law.
- Firm commitment to upholding the humanitarian principles.
- Emphasis on support to local, national and sub-national response and providing, where possible, support to capacity-building.
- Recognition of the importance of a differentiated approach according to context (conflict, slow-onset, rapid-onset and protracted crisis).
- Making significant progress in better alignment of development and humanitarian aid to support resilience-building and find lasting solutions.
- Importance of improving inter-operability* among actors according to a common understanding of key operating standards and approaches.
- Enabling agile, open, innovative and forward-thinking humanitarian action.
- Recognition that success of humanitarian action requires commitment and involvement of all actors.

A full consultation report, which the Regional Steering Group will publish in the coming weeks, will capture the complete array of recommendations and common observations. The co-chairs encourage all actors from this region to champion the recommendations, turn them into specific actions, and share lessons on their experience.

The above-mentioned considerations translated into the following emerging recommendations.

Serving the Needs of People in Conflict



A. Confront the radically changing humanitarian environment.

The operating environment for humanitarian action is changing fundamentally and becoming increasingly complex. Political solutions are few and far between. Consensus on the way forward is elusive.

- Reaffirm international humanitarian law, international refugee law and the humanitarian principles.
- Recognize space for collaboration and distinction amongst actors, as the range of actors and networks is changing, requiring a redefinition of the terms of engagement between them.

* There is no consensus definition, but the term in this context is taken to mean enabling different systems and actors to work better together.

- Pursue dialogue on engagement and boundaries between humanitarian and political actors to define their respective roles and responsibilities, including: a) expanding humanitarian space: sovereign rights vs. sovereign obligations; b) maintaining the distinction between political, military and humanitarian objectives; c) avoiding instrumentalisation of humanitarian action (e.g. military intervention couched in humanitarian terms; and political conditionality); d) ensuring these issues are reflected in the review on UN peace operations; e) reconfirming the imperative of humanitarian dialogue with all conflicting parties possible on the basis of humanitarian principles; f) continuing ability to operate for humanitarians in the context of counter-terrorism legislation.
- Identify potential game changers (e.g. emerging powers, private sector, technology and communications innovators) and their comparative advantages and terms of engagement, including: building on the comparative advantages of national and local actors; and identifying the space for action in each situation.

B. Put protection at the centre of humanitarian action.

- Engage in a dialogue with all actors, including state and non-state parties to a conflict, to highlight their responsibility for the full implementation of the range of normative frameworks and instruments—including international humanitarian law (IHL), international refugee law, human rights law, Security Council resolutions and other instruments—and advocate that all necessary steps be taken to address non-compliance thereto, including holding leaders of relevant parties accountable for such violations.
- Ensure all armed actors put procedures into place (in doctrine, training and education), including during security sector reform processes, that will result in greater respect of IHL.
- Reinforce the reach of humanitarian action to forcibly displaced people, including by expanding legal frameworks such as regional conventions on internally displaced people.
- Recognize the increasing complexity of situations of generalized violence other than conflict, and their potential humanitarian impact.
- Draw on the outcomes of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as important contributions to humanitarian debates in the wider community.
- Use the Summit as a ‘cry for humanity’ to protect and preserve the dignity of people affected by conflict and disaster.
- Consider a global mechanism to monitor the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver response to affected populations.
- Encourage the role of regional frameworks to improve the monitoring of IHL violations and promote the protection and assistance of affected people.
- Obtain a commitment from governments and other actors to ensure that migrants caught in conflict are afforded adequate protection.

C. Increase access and proximity.

- Recall the duty of parties to a conflict to respect impartial humanitarian action, including in facilitating access.
- Call on states at the Summit to commit to enable and facilitate access of affected people to humanitarian assistance and protection, as well as of humanitarian actors to people in need.
- Explore opportunities to adapt counter-terrorism regulations to enable access of humanitarian actors, including local actors, to all conflict-affected areas and to allow engagement of all parties to a conflict.

- Call on all parties to conflict to ensure safety and security of humanitarian staff, including through bringing the perpetrators of attacks on humanitarian workers and facilities to justice.
- Provide funding, flexibly enough to enable proximity, to humanitarian actors to help support their engagement in conflict-affected areas.
- Reaffirm humanitarian principles and ensure their understanding and respect by all actors and their application by humanitarians.

D. Address the deficit of political solutions.

- Highlight the importance of governments and the broader international community of acting urgently upon early warning and conflict prevention.
- Emphasise the need for greater political commitment and engagement in the resolution of conflict, and the achievement of sustained peace and security.
- Make sure humanitarian action is not politicised, including as a result of the shortcoming of political action.

E. Communicate the challenges.

- Generate a strong communication campaign over the very significant challenges faced in providing humanitarian assistance and the widespread violations of IHL and international refugee law.

Humanitarian Effectiveness



A. Make affected people and communities the prime agents of humanitarian response.

- Commit to meaningful participation of affected people in the entire programme cycle, including in assessments, project design and implementation, monitoring, and strategic decision-making.
- Map out and strive to resolve the practical and political barriers that impede accountability of humanitarian actors to affected people and that impair affected people from being the prime agents and voices in humanitarian response.
- Explore the use of innovations or approaches in other sectors to help people hold humanitarian response providers to account.

B. Create an enabling environment for humanitarian action.

- Reinforce the primary responsibility of governments in meeting the humanitarian needs of affected people, in particular the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Call for stronger government commitment to and compliance with international obligations and guidelines.
- Reaffirm the humanitarian principles and promote greater awareness of their operational significance in ways that can be understood by the wide variety of actors in humanitarian response.

C. Establish more predictable engagement among the many actors in humanitarian response.

- Support cooperation mechanisms at the international, national and local levels wherever possible.

- Create platforms or develop standards for cooperation among the actors involved in humanitarian response (such as private sector, diaspora, civil protection authorities, militaries, donors, national governments, international organizations, UN agencies, local and international NGOs) to better leverage each actor's capacity, resources and expertise for the overall humanitarian response effort.

D. Adapt humanitarian action models so that response appropriately meets the needs in different contexts.

- Make analytical capacity and context analysis, including on existing response capacities on the ground, appropriate to inform the right scale and footprint of international response.
- Establish national contingency plans that set out scaled thresholds for response and consequent roles of all actors (local, national, regional, and international).
- Reinforce government leadership and coordination where feasible and prioritize participation of local organizations and communities.
- Ensure that international humanitarian action is needs-based, has comparative advantage and is critical to helping people in need.
- Map the typology of response that encompasses both the emergency and longer-term phases and incorporates the implications into response planning.

E. Ensure longer-term, flexible funding that supports appropriate responses in different contexts.

- Promote mechanisms to increase donor risk tolerance in high-risk environments, including opportunities for direct funding to local actors.
- Aim to achieve common minimum donor standards for grant application and accounting requirements by 2020.
- Direct more funding to reinforce the centrality of protection in humanitarian response.
- Invest in transparent, comprehensive and open data on financing flows of all actors.

F. Explore developing a common framework for effective humanitarian action.

- Agree on and promote common standards for humanitarian action.
- Invest in the generation of evidence to inform appropriate humanitarian response, including ensuring a greater focus on generating and using gender-sensitive disaggregated data.
- Establish a mechanism for measuring the impact of preparedness and response and ensuring that it feeds institutional learning.

Managing Risk and Reducing Vulnerability



A. Reinforce government commitment to and investment in disaster risk management and humanitarian response.

- Promote the impartial provision of assistance, focusing on those most vulnerable.
- Strengthen legal frameworks for disaster risk management and response, including drawing on IDRL.²

² Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance.

- Make adequate domestic budget allocations for disaster risk management.
- Devolve, where possible, responsibility including finance to the local level.

B. Promote the role of regional organizations in crisis preparedness, response and resilience.

- Create intra- and inter-regional linkages for exchanging best practice.
- Set and monitor national-level standards on disaster risk management.
- Build on the experience of the EU and other regional organisations in developing mechanisms for training, preparedness and deployment of national capacities, including south-south cooperation.
- Explore opportunities for dedicated funding mechanisms for investing in national capacity.

C. Recognize the key role of civil society organizations and local actors in preparedness and response.

- Develop better compliance frameworks and risk management that allow funding to flow to local actors, also taking into consideration accountability requirements.
- Invest in their capacity to conduct needs assessment to drive response, and as long-term partners for resilience, not just as vehicles enabling international response.
- Explore a target for increasing, by 2020, the proportion of humanitarian funding to local and national actors.
- Enhance mechanisms to reinforce the quality assurance of local responders, including peer reviews.

D. Commit to shared, multi-hazard analysis of risk amongst all actors to support the prioritisation of action and development of long-term strategies.

- Include affected and at-risk communities.
- Integrate political economy analysis and shared data.
- Forge greater linkages with the science community.
- Undertake a global analysis of risk between humanitarian, development and climate change communities (e.g. biannually).

E. Develop an agreement between humanitarian and development communities to enable more effective cooperation in recurrent and protracted crises.

- Promote integrated programme planning with the participation of affected communities, based on shared analysis and common outcomes.
- Complete common risk analysis and planning in at least 3 countries by 2016, including exit strategies for humanitarians and investment plans for longer-term resilience, thus allowing seamless implementation.
- Introduce incentives to reinforce co-operation between these two communities.

F. Maximise coherence on risk management and resilience with relevant post-2015 processes.

- Promote potential for indicators for risk resilience across disaster risk, development and climate change frameworks and agreements.

- Through the WHS, promote active engagement of all relevant actors in the implementation of the post-2015 processes.

G. Enhance the financing of resilience and preparedness.

- Develop longer-term programming tools and innovative finance mechanisms that support resilience.
- Reduce divisions between humanitarian and development finance to ensure a more coherent approach to managing risk and vulnerabilities.
- Base funding decisions on the comparative advantage of humanitarian and development actors.
- Explore setting a target on increased funding to preparedness by 2020, including roles, responsibilities and comparative advantage of different actors.

H. Strengthen engagement with the private sector on resilience.

- Provide incentives for engaging the private sector, such as through tax breaks.
- Stimulate the rapid restoration of local markets post-disaster.
- Reduce or suspend the transaction costs of remittances in the immediate post-crisis period.
- Examine opportunities to look more towards the insurance industry, including using best practice and discipline from risk financing.

I. Find solutions to protracted displacement.

- Call for early and increased development investment in addressing protracted displacement.

J. Determine and acknowledge the humanitarian dimension of mixed migration.

Transformation through Innovation



Innovation should be driven by the needs of affected people and seen as a key contribution to improving humanitarian effectiveness.

A. Invest human capital and money in humanitarian innovation.

- Invest in humanitarian innovation – drawing resources from multiple sources, including the research and scientific communities, private sector and others. Such investment needs to have a high tolerance for high-risk, high-impact projects.
- Introduce secondments that allow humanitarian actors to spend time in other sectors—particularly the business sector—and vice versa to enhance learning and understanding.
- Generate funding that is responsive to local context and builds capacity for innovation, accommodating risk-taking and the long-term benefits of innovation.

B. Ensure innovation is done in an ethical and principled way.

- Develop a set of ethical standards to guide development of new products and processes, particularly where these involve human subjects. These should be in line with humanitarian principles and ensure that all investment in humanitarian innovation is designed to improve outcomes for affected people.
- Aim to gain commitment to these standards at the Summit.

C. Create opportunities for cross-fertilisation and dialogue across sectors and policy fields.

- Develop mechanisms to openly share new ideas and approaches, including the use of online platforms where innovation projects can be uploaded, to avoid duplication, foster learning and sharing and amplify models that could be brought to scale by other actors (enabling the community to find innovations in which they might wish to invest or collaborate). These should proactively solicit and share experience from the field.
- Expand humanitarian research and innovation hubs which allow dialogue and cross-fertilisation between sectors, particularly at the local level. These should include the local private sector and a wide range of local, national and international stakeholders.

D. Localize innovation.

- Empower local actors and affected communities through capacity-building to engage in partnerships for innovation while ensuring accountability and sustainability.
- Stimulate funds and resources to drive innovation at the local level to be evaluated over a 5-year period (2016-2021).
- Spur inclusivity of innovation so that it is for the benefit of and shaped by vulnerable populations.

E. Augment evidence-based learning and knowledge-management.

- Build and sustain an evidence base of good practice, means, successes, failures and impact of innovation in humanitarian action, to support and incentivise innovation.
- Ensure shared responsibility and a more strategic approach to learning and knowledge management within humanitarian action, including integrating into the programme cycle.³

F. Prioritize areas for innovation.

- Identify in the lead-up to the Summit a small number of priority areas for accelerated innovation. These should be identified by the prospective users of innovation, and particularly by affected people. Potential ideas might include: improving aid delivery in insecure environments; needs assessment; changing the humanitarian business model from one focusing on delivery to one focusing on facilitation; and increasing the accessibility of humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable.

G. Scale up promising innovation.

- Realign organisational incentives to enable scale-up. For example, examine the role of governance structures, legal frameworks, and professional incentives to take managed risk.
- Bring the use of multi-purpose cash up to scale, ensuring that delivery platforms are accessible and coherent.

³ 'Programme cycle' means preparedness—assessment—planning—implementation—monitoring—evaluation.