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FINANCING: INVESTING IN HUMANITY

HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE

Core Responsibility Five of the Agenda for Humanity

“There [...] needs to be a shift from ‘media headline funding’ to ‘stability investment.’”

Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit

BACKGROUND

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit will take place from 23 to 24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. Three years of extensive consultations reaching more than 23,000 people in 153 countries clearly called for change in how the international community addresses humanitarian need and suffering and called for a renewed commitment to humanity. Istanbul is the moment to demonstrate global unity and solidarity to prevent and end suffering, and to take all steps necessary to make humanity the driver of decision-making and collective action.

In his report for the World Humanitarian Summit, the United Nations Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other stakeholders to accept and act upon five core responsibilities that he believes are critical to delivering better for humanity. His Agenda for Humanity outlines the key actions and strategic shifts necessary to deliver on these responsibilities. The Secretary-General urges global leaders at the Summit to commit to taking the Agenda forward.



This should be a framework for action, change and mutual accountability to measure progress over the next three years and beyond.

The High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on "Investing in Humanity" addresses Core Responsibility Five of the Agenda for Humanity and calls on leaders to guarantee the minimum resources necessary to preserve life and dignity for people affected by conflict and disasters.

CONTEXT

The scale of humanitarian appeals has increased six-fold in the last decade, from \$3.4 billion in 2004 to \$19.5 billion in 2015. Funding levels are not keeping pace. 2015 saw both the highest levels of funding ever contributed to UN humanitarian appeals (\$10.7 billion) and the biggest shortfall between needs and resources. Just 55 per cent of UN annual appeals were met, leading to needless deaths from malnutrition and other preventable causes, cutting of food rations, children in emergencies losing access to education, and the closure of healthcare services.

In a \$78 trillion global economy, the estimated \$15 billion gap between needs and resources can and must be closed. Reducing the gap between needs and resources requires tackling a number of challenges.

There is much that can be done to make existing resources go further, including increasing direct funding to frontline responders, investing in preparedness and early action, reducing the cost of remittances and leveraging development financing to reduce the burden on humanitarian response. Funding going directly to local humanitarian actors is extremely low: in 2014, only 0.2 per cent of international humanitarian funding went directly to national and local NGOs. Investment in disaster prevention and preparedness represents only 0.4 per cent of ODA in 2014. Remittances are triple the size of ODA, but crisis-affected people face punitive transaction costs in accessing these. Additionally, the majority of humanitarian funds go to protracted crises, substituting for absent or limited development, peacebuilding and conflict prevention investments. There are global inequalities in funding, with high profile emergencies drawing resources from other crises.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on "Investing in Humanity" is to commit to actions which will guarantee the minimum resources necessary to preserve life and dignity for people affected by conflict and disasters and will maximise the impact of available resources.

In line with the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity, this roundtable will address questions including:

- *What are the reforms donor countries and humanitarian agencies need to agree to undertake to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian response?*
- *What new financing instruments and resources can the development community contribute to managing crises and reducing fragility?*
- *How can we guarantee minimum funding levels for humanitarian appeals, and ensure the most flexible and efficient funding channels are prioritized?*



In answering these questions, leaders at the roundtable are expected to offer commitments which operationalize the Agenda for Humanity, for instance through agreeing a 'Grand Bargain' setting out the reforms donor countries and humanitarian agencies will undertake to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of responses.

These could also include leveraging new crisis response financing from the development community; harnessing the private sector through local, regional and industry-specific networks, and financing innovation; and the ability to recognize, track and channel diverse funding sources including faith-based funding such as Islamic social impact bonds.

An additional outcome would be a commitment to scale up humanitarian finance by increasing the coverage of inter-agency humanitarian appeals to a minimum average of 75 per cent, the Central Emergency Response Fund to \$1 billion and increasing the overall proportion of humanitarian appeal funding channeled through UN-managed country-based pooled funds to 15 per cent.

Through joint action and mutual accountability, leaders can help to guarantee the minimum resources necessary to preserve life and dignity for people affected by conflict and disasters.

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE*

The High-Level Leaders' Roundtable will be convened and moderated by a Chair and supported by a Rapporteur. The roundtable will result in a Roundtable Summary which will include the individual and collective commitments made by participants and a way forward. The Roundtable Summary will contribute to the Chair's Summary of the World Humanitarian Summit.

This High-Level Leaders' Roundtable will last for two hours, with interventions from between 35 and 50 global leaders. Each leader may be accompanied by two advisors. Leaders will speak from assigned seats (roundtable format) and their interventions should not exceed three minutes. The roundtable will be open to media and be broadcast and webcast live. The time and location for this session will be made known shortly.

REGISTRATION AND ROUNDTABLE PREPARATIONS

The objective of this Roundtable will be for Member States and other stakeholders to announce commitments to make tangible progress against the recommendations under Core Responsibility Five of the Agenda for Humanity. Please register your interest in the roundtable and the level of participation you envisage for this event at Financing.roundtable@whsummit.org by March 25, 2016.

The WHS secretariat will contact interested Member States and other stakeholders over the next two months to work together to prepare each High-Level Leaders' Roundtable, including by identifying and securing concrete commitments aimed at making progress against each of the five Core Responsibilities of the Agenda for Humanity. This interaction will build upon and expand existing partnerships with Member States and stakeholders.

*The format and structure of the roundtable are subject to modification.