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REMARKS TO PLENARY OF WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT  
DRAFT 05.20.16

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS:

HERE TWO WORLDS CONVERGE. ONE IS A WORLD OF OPTIMISM AND  
PROGRESS – COMPELLINGLY CAPTURED IN THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

THE OTHER IS A WORLD ON FIRE. ITS CONSEQUENCES ARE ALL AROUND US  
RIGHT HERE. THE TWO MILLION PLUS SYRIANS SEEKING REFUGE HERE IN  
TURKEY REPRESENT ITS HUMAN FACE.

THE COMPELLING QUESTION BEFORE US AT THIS HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT  
IS: WHICH WORLD WILL PREVAIL?

WE ARE ALL OPTIMISTS – WE BELIEVE A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE – OR  
WE WOULDN'T BE HERE. BUT WE ARE ALSO REALISTS. WE KNOW THAT  
PROGRESS, AND THE HOPEFUL VISION OF THE SDGS, CANNOT BE REALIZED  
IF WE ARE NOT ABLE TO EXTINGUISH THE FLAMES OF CONFLICT AND  
VIOLENCE.

WE, AS THE GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY, NEED NOT ONLY TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN SAVING LIVES AND ALLIEVIATING SUFFERING, BUT ALSO MORE CAPABLE IN TACKLING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY.

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR FRESH THINKING AND BOLD ACTION: RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.

MERCY CORPS STRONGLY ENDORSES THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S FOCUS ON PREVENTING AND ENDING CONFLICT. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, PEACEBUILDING AND GOOD GOVERNANCE MUST NOW BE INTEGRAL TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION FROM THE GET-GO. OTHERWISE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO CHURN IN ENDLESS CYCLES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

WE MUST BREAK THROUGH ALL BARRIERS BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AID AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. SAVING LIVES, MEETING URGENT NEEDS, WEAKENING THE DRIVERS OF CONFLICT, NURTURING GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND FOSTERING A RESILIENT, JUST FUTURE ARE ALL INEXTRICABLY CONNECTED.

WE MUST PUT PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS IN THE DRIVING SEAT OF HUMANITARIAN AID. THE SINGLE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE THING WE CAN DO IS TO GIVE PEOPLE CASH.

LET'S MAKE CASH THE DEFAULT, WHEREVER IT MAKES SENSE. IT DISRUPTS A BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM, IT SUPPORTS LOCAL MARKETS, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT RESTORES PEOPLE'S DIGNITY.

WE URGE GREATER INVESTMENT IN YOUTH. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE LARGEST CONSTITUENCY IN MOST FRAGILE SOCIETIES WRACKED BY CONFLICT. ADOLESCENTS ARE OFTEN PORTRAYED AS A DEMOGRAPHIC TIME-BOMB. WE SEE THEM AS ENGINES FOR GROWTH AND STABILITY: FUTURE LEADERS IN PEACEFUL SOCIETIES.

THE STAKES HERE ARE AS HIGH AS IN PARIS. THEY ARE ALL THE MORE URGENT BECAUSE OF UNPRECEDENTED HUMAN SUFFERING TODAY. LET'S GET IT RIGHT. WE MUST REFASHION HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO A SINGLE PURPOSE: BETTER, MORE PEACEFUL AND MORE RESILIENT LIVES FOR PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, ESPECIALLY IN THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST PLACES.

AS OPTIMISTS – AS GLOBAL HUMANITARIANS – LET US PUT FORWARD OUR MOST POSITIVE ATTITUDES, OUR BEST THINKING, OUR BOLD IDEAS, AND A COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP. A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU.