

World Humanitarian Summit
Plenary Statement

Academic Engagement in the New Agenda for Humanity:
Advancing Evidence and Leadership

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Mr. Chairman and honored guests,

It is my privilege to address this plenary session of the World Humanitarian Summit.

As global aid is experiencing an era of rapid expansion and diversification of humanitarian aims, and the need for advancing the capacity to measure what we do, question its effectiveness and to educate and train future humanitarian leaders is an essential part of our evolution. The role of academic organizations, universities, teachers and researchers has never been more relevant.

It is my honor to represent a community of humanitarian scholars and researchers and the International Humanitarian Studies Association (IHSA) by reciting the:

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENTS FROM HUMANITARIAN SCHOLARS
AT WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT**

The future of effective responses to humanitarian crises depends on developing a strong base of knowledge about current emergencies and their contexts; the populations affected by these emergencies; and the institutions and interventions that seek to meet humanitarian needs and resolve these crises. Those engaged in humanitarian studies, which includes research and education, are essential to this effort.

Humanitarian studies critically examines the ways in which humanitarian crises originate and evolve, how they affect people, institutions and societies, and the responses they trigger. This field is not simply about being an instrumental partner to humanitarian actors in addressing the policy and practice issues of today. Humanitarian studies is about critically engaging with forces and factors that cause crises in order to imagine and achieve a different future for the world.

Humanitarian studies scholars present at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the International Humanitarian Studies Association (IHSA) make the following six commitments:

1. We commit to make humanitarian research more collaborative and inclusive,

especially with non-traditional knowledge actors and affected communities, and to ensure that knowledge is relevant to policy and practice.

2. We commit to research the impacts of the WHS - both positive and negative - on those affected by humanitarian emergencies and the future of humanitarian action. This research will include assessing the fulfillment and non-fulfillment of commitments made by WHS participants; the impact of those commitments; and the process and history of the summit itself.

3. We commit to further develop and adopt evidence-based approaches relevant to humanitarian research. Member states and humanitarian actors should support the achievement of this commitment by making humanitarian research and education a political, financial, and operational priority.

4. We commit to localize humanitarian research and education within the regions and communities affected by emergencies by recognizing, establishing, supporting and collaborating with research and educational institutions in crisis-affected areas. Member states should work to remove political, regulatory, and financial barriers that prevent the development of research institutions in crisis-affected areas.

5. We commit to improve the impact and increase the use of humanitarian research by encouraging and supporting trans-disciplinary research that collaborates with non-traditional knowledge actors. To this end, we will strive to make our research accessible and relevant beyond traditional venues, such as conferences and publications, by placing the enfranchisement of affected communities themselves at the center of our work.

6. We commit to protect academic freedom, uphold scientific ethics, and be accountable for the research we do, how it is undertaken, and how it is used. We will seek to make our results and data as open and public as possible, ensuring that our ethical obligations to the populations we research, and those who conduct this research come first.

This statement reflects the commitment of the global academic community to advance and support evidence based humanitarian aims and to promote a humanitarian community that is professional, ethical, effective, and accountable.

I thank my colleagues for their truly participatory approach to developing this Statement, which will begin to guide our future agenda for academic engagement and usher us into a new era of intelligent humanitarianism.

Thank you