



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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Briefing to Member States

Preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit

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As delivered

{Welcome Ambassador Cevik of Turkey and Ion Botnaru, Director, General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division from the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management.}

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As each day goes by, the importance of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul from 23 to 24 May grows. In the words of the Secretary-General, ‘we live in an age of mega-crises’. Everyone in this room is well aware of the global challenges that face the humanitarian system today. The bottom line is that we haven’t seen these levels of humanitarian needs since the Second World War.

The World Humanitarian Summit must mark a turning point and allow us to tackle challenges head on. We must seize the opportunity to re-inspire and reinvigorate our shared commitment to humanity and the universality of the humanitarian principles. We will commit to a concrete set of actions and commitments that will enable all – including member-states, affected populations, civil society, and the private sector – to better prepare for and respond to crises, and to become more resilient to shocks. We must put affected people at the centre of all decision-making. This is the only way we can hope to alleviate the suffering of those who are at risk of being left behind.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned last week in my briefing in Geneva, the Secretary-General’s report will be shared in the coming days and will be formally launched by the Secretary-General himself on the 9th of February.

The report will build on the consultation process, as well as those from other key processes such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the high-level panels on peace operations and humanitarian financing, the peace-building review, the review of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the new Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction, and the Paris Agreement.

The report places humanity and affected people at the centre of global decision making. This is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity to confront today's global challenges. Humanitarian issues should never be seen as a discrete, technical stream of work. The Secretary-General will argue that successful humanitarian action makes a vital contribution to the strength of the UN's three pillars: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

The Secretary-General will highlight five core responsibilities:

First, we must secure global leadership to prevent and end conflicts. We must act early, invest in stability, and develop solutions with and for people. Put simply, we must find ways to reduce the unsustainable demands being placed on the humanitarian system.

Second, we must reiterate the need for everyone to respect the norms that safeguard our humanity, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law as well as the humanitarian principles.

Third, the report will remind us that to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must reach the most vulnerable and furthest behind first. The Summit will be the first test of our commitment to "leave no one behind". This requires us to meaningfully address needs of internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants, the stateless, women and girls, children and youth among others. The report will include recommendations on how to improve gender equality and empower women and girls. Of course, we also focus on both the needs and roles of children, youth, older persons and people with disabilities.

Fourth, we must commit to changing people's lives and move from delivering aid to ending need. This means that we – all of us – need to find a new way of working if we are to effectively tackle the humanitarian and development challenges of today and tomorrow. We can do this by putting people at the centre of decision-making; addressing vulnerability and risk; reinforcing rather than replacing local and national systems; and overcoming the age-old "humanitarian-development divide" by working towards collective outcomes.

We can no longer afford to work in silos. We must transcend the divides that so often undermine the sustainability of our work. We must invest in more effective and efficient partnerships. This means more empowered leadership to drive coherent, coordinated and collective outcomes and results. In addition, it means a more local, more inclusive and more context-specific response. It also means reinforcing national and local capacities, rather than substituting or replacing them so that we support more resilient communities.

And fifth, we must enable all of this by investing in humanity. The Secretary-General and I were both in the United Arab Emirates on 17 January to launch the report of his High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. Many of the Panel's recommendations will be in the Secretary-General's report. This includes diversifying and optimizing financing not only for humanitarian response but for broader risk management, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The Secretary-General will also state that without a fundamental shift from funding individual projects to financing outcomes, it will not be possible to transcend the humanitarian-development divide and achieve his vision on working to collective outcomes.

There should also be a broader range of financing approaches available for different contexts: be they traditional grants, social impact bonds, or risk insurance. Investing in humanity also means investing in local capacities.

As an annex to the report, the Secretary-General will put forward an Agenda for Humanity. The Agenda will encapsulate the Secretary-General's vision, and outline what is needed to deliver on the five core responsibilities identified in the report. The Agenda for Humanity will provide the framework under which Member States can announce commitments at the Summit.

The Secretary-General will also urge all stakeholders, including Member States, to take forward this Agenda in order to build a shared vision for action, change and mutual accountability.

Let me be clear; this report and the whole Summit is not only about humanitarian action in conflict situation. These five areas of responsibility are relevant in all humanitarian contexts, whether they be man-made conflicts or natural disasters.

Following the release of the report, we all need to continue to engage, consult and work with each other on how to best support and advance the Agenda so that leaders at the World Humanitarian Summit are ready for Istanbul to be the turning point we need for millions of people.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This leads me to the organizational arrangements for the Summit and the critical role that Member States and other stakeholders can play.

The Summit will have an opening and closing ceremony which will include statements by the host-country, the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the Secretary-General. Participation will include a balanced geographical and stakeholder representation at the highest level, and will also include representatives from crisis-affected communities.

The Summit will include five main features, all of which will be framed by the vision put forward by the Secretary-General in his report and the Agenda for Humanity that outlines the practical actions to achieve the vision.

First, the Secretary-General will convene a Summit Announcement Plenary where Heads of State or Government and their representatives as well as other high-level leaders from regional organizations, international and non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector will make individual statements announcing ambitious and action-oriented commitments aimed at furthering the core responsibilities set out in the report of the Secretary-General and the Agenda for Humanity.

Second, the Summit will feature High-Level Leaders' Roundtables. They will be interactive and multi-stakeholder in nature and will be broadly focused on the five core responsibilities from the Secretary-General's report. They will provide high-profile opportunities for Heads

of State and Government and high-level representatives from other stakeholders to make commitments and announce bold actions in support of the Agenda for Humanity.

The planned roundtables will align with the core five responsibilities put forward in the Agenda, including political leadership to prevent and end conflicts; respect for international humanitarian law and protection; addressing and reducing displacement; building resilience in protracted crises; response in the face of natural disasters and climate change and reducing impacts; women and girls' leadership and empowerment; humanitarian financing and; investing in humanity and building the future of humanitarian action towards more effective, context-specific, and predictable responses.

While intense work is taking place on the content and participation in the roundtables, I can offer you some indications of the kind of commitments expected from high-level representatives.

For instance, at the roundtable on international humanitarian law and protection, will aim to generate commitments towards the establishment of tracking and analysis of violations, accession to core treaties, strengthening national, and international judicial systems.

At roundtable on displacement we will focus on reducing the vulnerability of refugees and IDPs, and supporting the efforts of local institutions and communities hosting displaced persons.

At the roundtable on natural disasters, commitments will build on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals and the new Climate Agreement, with a clear focus on bold actions to preparing and responding to natural shocks, for instance through better collective approaches to crisis management, risk financing, insurance, and social protection.

The aim of the roundtable on resilience is to encourage longer term planning and investment, and greater coherence between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding action.

Commitments at the roundtable on conflict prevention will focus on how to best stay engaged and invest in stability once a conflict breaks out and how to develop sustainable and peaceful solutions with and for the people.

The roundtable on gender will aim to address accountability, leadership, and funding to ensure that humanitarian action delivers equally for women and girls.

The roundtable on humanitarian finance builds on the report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and will seek final commitments on a 'grand bargain' on efficiency; the diversification of finance and greater recognition, tracking and brokering of diverse funding sources, and accelerating the SDG target to reduce the cost of remittances in crisis situations.

Finally, the roundtable on building the future of humanitarian action is to gain commitments from stakeholders to adapt the current humanitarian sector towards more effective, context-specific and predictable response arrangements which are fit to address new threats and

challenges, building on the complementarity and comparative advantage of different actors, including the critical role of innovation and the private sector, in accordance with humanitarian principles.

And the third main feature of the Summit is comprised of special events, including around the following themes: a global urban crisis alliance, Islamic social finance, empowering youth, education in emergencies, response in global health crises, religious leaders and faith based organizations for humanitarian action, innovation, people with disabilities in humanitarian action, and putting communities at the centre of humanitarian response.

The fourth feature of the Summit will be a number of side events organized with and by Member States, international and non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders in the form of briefings, seminars, workshops and panel discussions.

Fifth, the Summit will feature an exhibition fair and innovation marketplace dedicated to showcasing the work, products and programmes of governments, organizations, agencies, companies and other institutions and partners in support of humanitarian action.

The Secretary-General together with the Turkish government will also host a luncheon with Heads of State or Government and other guests to seize the moment and focus global leaders' attention on his vision for change. And as it becomes clearer what the attendance will be, we will develop plans for a dinner.

In terms of products, the Summit will result in a chair's summary that will include a summary of proceedings capturing the main issues and recommendations coming out of the Summit.

The Summit will also result in a Commitments to Action document that reflects the concrete set of bold actions, leadership and commitments made by global leaders throughout the Summit.

A report of the Secretary-General on the outcomes of the Summit will also be prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/106. The report will be provided to the Assembly before the start of its 71st session.

A detailed note on the organizational arrangements has been made available in the room today and more information is available on the World Humanitarian Summit website. A note verbale with relevant information for Member States on organizational arrangements will be sent to Permanent Missions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the lead up to the Summit we will continue to hold monthly briefing sessions and further update you on preparations, to listen to your views, and identify commitments to action from Member States at the Summit and build support for the Secretary-General's vision. Intensified outreach will be undertaken to rally support for the Summit, including by working with a number of key champions.

Let me conclude by thanking you for your engagement in this process to date. I continue to reiterate my thanks to the Government of Turkey and the Turkish people for their generosity in hosting this event and their commitment to a successful outcome. And once again I would like to pay special tribute to the 23,000 people who have contributed their energy and expertise during the Summit consultation process.

I urge you all to join the Secretary-General in Istanbul at the highest political level. Safeguarding humanity and promoting human progress for all must become the central drivers of our decision making and collective actions. The Summit is a critical and historic moment to ensure that people across the world have a chance to live in safety and dignity and have the opportunity to thrive, not only survive.

Thank you.