



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNITED NATIONS UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
**FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF**  
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**STATEMENT ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN**  
**SUMMIT: THE PATH TO ISTANBUL**

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*Checked against delivery*

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief you on preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit.

In recent months, the news headlines have demonstrated clearly why this World Humanitarian Summit is so critical.

Each day, we are faced with fresh stories detailing the challenges that confront us as an international community.

We see the effects of climate change in the Horn of Africa, South East Asia and the Pacific.

We hear of refugees fleeing the brutality of war across the high seas; and we read of dangerous pandemics that threaten us all.

Protracted crises, urban need, and fragility have become the new normal.

No single country or organization can deal with these issues alone. Collective action and partnership are the only ways to truly tackle these global, interconnected and often borderless problems.

Over seventy years ago, leaders came together to express their commitment to international cooperation to end the scourge of war. Leaders agreed a United Nations Charter that placed at its heart peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

The Secretary-General believes that we have reached a similar juncture in history again.

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

That is why on the 23rd and 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 in Istanbul, the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit will convene to re-affirm these commitments and to recognize our collective capacity and responsibility to help the millions of people affected by war and disaster.

Bringing together leaders, we will aspire to a world where no one caught in the midst of a crisis dies needlessly; no one goes hungry; and the innocent need not live in fear of their lives because of political paralysis, a lack of resources or a system that cannot protect them or meet their needs.

This is the Secretary-General's vision for this Summit. We will aim to achieve three mutually reinforcing goals:

First, the Summit will re-inspire and reinvigorate our shared commitment to humanity and the universality of the humanitarian principles. This means putting affected people at the centre of humanitarian action and political decision-making. This is the only way we can hope to alleviate the suffering of the 100 million people in this world who are at risk of being left behind.

Second, it will agree a concrete set of actions and commitments to enable all of us - member-states, affected populations, civil society, and the private sector - to better prepare for and respond to crises, and be more resilient to shocks.

And thirdly, it will be a platform to share knowledge and best practice among Governments and the wide spectrum of organizations involved in humanitarian action.

In the lead-up to the Summit, the United Nations reached out to over 23,000 people in every region and from all corners of the globe to help shape the future agenda for humanitarian action.

I warmly thank all those governments that have helped us prepare for the consultations, in particular those that have hosted and provided financial contributions for the regional, thematic, and global consultations.

This process was vital to determining the critical issues of concern to different constituents, most of all the affected people themselves, and to propose solutions to the most pressing issues.

The message from our partners throughout these consultations was clear: the landscape in which we are operating is changing. We must all adapt and evolve. Business as usual is simply not good enough.

So what does this mean in concrete terms?

The Global Consultation held in Geneva from 14–16 October – which, by all accounts, was a great success - demonstrated a broad consensus around the major findings of the Synthesis Report and its five action areas – Dignity, Safety, Resilience, Partnerships, and Finance.

Building on this process, my team and I are developing concrete ideas for inclusion in the upcoming Secretary-General's report, which will be issued by the end of January 2016. The report will include the following six – equally valid – priority action areas.

First, we need to establish better ways of dealing with **protracted and recurrent crises**.

Today, 80% of humanitarian resources are being channelled to protracted crises – many of which are in the midst of conflict. And the demand just keeps growing. To respond, we need to take a more systematic approach to cooperation between humanitarian and development actors. We can no longer afford to work in silos. We must bridge the divides that so often undermine the sustainability of our work. I know that this is an issue that has been discussed for over twenty-five years. But the recently-agreed Sustainable Development Goals have established a fifteen year results framework for all of us - development and humanitarian actors.

This partnership between development and humanitarian actors is equally important in both conflict situations and natural disasters.

The SDGs tell us all we must focus on vulnerability and risk – in all their forms. This means that from the very outset, humanitarian and development actors need to work in a far more integrated way, based on joint assessments and problem analyses. We must plan and deliver over a 3 to 5 year timeline. And commit to delivering collective results. In order to support national resilience, we should seek to generate 'preparedness agreements' between governments and the international community well in advance of shocks, in order to ensure that national systems are resilient to disasters and regional health crises. The Secretary-General and I are committed to making this happen. But we will need your support.

Secondly - and this is very much linked to the first priority - we need **secure, adequate, and predictable finance** to support people in crises.

To deliver for humanity – especially those caught up in conflict – we need to invest our resources smarter. At the Summit, the Secretary-General will ask Member States to make a commitment to move away from approaches to financing that contribute to fragmentation. And instead adopt approaches that incentivize cooperation. This means Member States should focus less on individual projects or agencies in a country. And instead invest in results-driven, multi-year programmes that bridge the humanitarian and development divide. The upcoming report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on humanitarian financing should provide some clear and focused recommendations that will feed into the Secretary-General's Report and the upcoming Summit.

Third, we need to manage **forced displacement** more effectively.

The Summit will be the first test of our commitment in the SDGs to 'leave no one behind'. We know that the majority of the world's poor live in areas affected by conflict. In Istanbul, the Secretary-General will re-emphasise his call to reduce significantly the number of people who are forcibly displaced by 2030 and address their needs. To achieve this, we need leaders to focus on political solutions and longer term planning and

investment. The Summit will be an opportunity to recognize that the countries and communities hosting refugees and IDPs need more help. This means providing them with longer term financial support, including investment in infrastructure and services for the mutual benefit of both host communities and the displaced. We need to promote greater self-reliance amongst the displaced through programmes that provide them with livelihoods, jobs and educational opportunities. And we must support safe and voluntary return.

Fourth, as an international community we need to use the Summit to deliver on the **centrality of protection**.

The Secretary-General sees the Istanbul Summit as an opportunity for leaders to re-commit to upholding the rules that protect people in conflict. Member States should consider using the Summit as an opportunity to sign up to some of the key instruments of the international legal framework. This also means taking steps to ensure that robust action is taken when there are violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and ensuring that people who need humanitarian assistance and protection receive it in accordance with international law.

Fifth, the principles of **gender equality and women's empowerment** will run through the report and inform all its recommendations.

The Secretary-General will call on all stakeholders to make commitments in this area, including on ensuring the participation of women in peace processes; more systematic and meaningful inclusion of women in humanitarian leadership; and coordinated momentum to prevent, protect and respond to gender-based violence. This will build on the ongoing progress in this area, including on the Global Review of Security Council Resolution 1325.

And sixth, we need a humanitarian system that is **more local, more inclusive, and more context-specific**.

Too often, the international system fails to recognize the life-saving role that local communities and institutions play during a crisis. Communities hosting refugees and the Ebola crisis are both good examples of the important roles played by local communities. We should therefore look for ways to channel resources directly to local actors, and build national and local capacities to deliver at scale and coordinate effectively. We should also explore ways to scale up and further strengthen deployable capacities, particularly in the Global South.

If any of these areas are to be successfully implemented, we need to ensure that the **humanitarian system itself is fit-for-purpose**. As I look ahead at the challenges we face as humanitarians, I believe that we need a system that is flexible, nimble and adaptable; one that is able to innovate and embrace change. And one that is stronger at allowing us to deliver collectively and coherently.

Most importantly, we need a system that embraces partnership. Partnership with national and local governments, affected communities, diaspora, private sector, civil society and the full range of actors that contribute to the success of humanitarian action.

The United Nations will need to play its part in embracing change, within existing mandates. I know that we must do more to become coherent. That is why I am already undertaking a review within OCHA to ensure that we are optimized to fulfil our mandate and coordinate the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. And I will continue to discuss these issues with my colleagues in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee over the coming months to ensure that we can strengthen our collective delivery and response in crises.

In order to deliver real change, the United Nations cannot succeed without your support and without your ideas. As we refine and develop these action areas over the coming months, the input and advice of Member States and all relevant stakeholders will be invaluable.

I therefore invite the membership to work closely with me and my team in the coming months to help us progress our thinking and develop these initial ideas so that they can blossom into truly transformative initiatives by the time we reach Istanbul in May.

### **The Road to Istanbul**

So, how do we get to Istanbul from here?

In advance of the launch of the Secretary-General's Report, I am committed to **continuing to consult and engage closely with you** and with other stakeholders in an open and transparent way to discuss further how we shape the priority action areas that I have outlined today.

Once the report has been issued, we will hold a series of informal sessions open to all of the Membership as well as other stakeholders to discuss and receive your feedback and inputs on the key themes and recommendations in the report.

We will hold monthly briefing sessions at both expert and senior levels on the preparations for the Summit to keep you fully informed, to listen to your views, and to build support for the main priority action areas of the Secretary-General's Report. This will also allow us to prepare the ground for heads of state and other senior-level stakeholders to announce commitments to action in Istanbul.

We will take the opportunity of using all formats available to us, including in ECOSOC and the General Assembly in the months ahead to continue to inform, exchange and engage with all of you.

We would be happy to meet with regional groups. I deeply appreciate the active consideration being given by regional groups, through the regional consultations and otherwise. I am grateful for the policy positions on the Summit recently set out by regional organizations, including the African Union, European Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean states.

### **The Summit modalities**

On the Summit itself, the precise modalities are still being finalized. I hope to be able to brief Member States in full on the details in December.

Given the Secretary-General's level of ambition for this Summit, he expects participation at the Head of State/ head of government level. It will be a defining and historic moment for your Head of State and Government to demonstrate their personal leadership and commitment to confronting the most fundamental and pressing issues of our time. This is their chance to showcase your country's contributions to this vital endeavour.

The Summit agenda will allow Heads of State and government, the high-level representatives of civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders to make announcements and commitments, launch new initiatives and partnerships, and to showcase innovative practices and ideas in support of the Secretary-General's vision.

In terms of outcomes, I envisage two main concrete outcomes:

First, we will have a *Chair's Summary* of proceedings that captures the main issues and recommendations coming out of the Summit with an assessment of the main points of the deliberations by all stakeholders. The Chair's Summary will be developed at the conclusion of the Summit and communicated widely to stakeholders.

Secondly, participants will have the opportunity to make their own *commitments to action* in support of this vision. World leaders will be expected to announce and champion bold actions in support of the priority action areas and for other concrete initiatives and actions.

In addition, we hope that leaders and other stakeholders at the Summit will publicly *lend their political support to the Secretary-General's vision* and the key action areas set out in his report.

As I have said before, the Summit will not mark the end of the process. There will still be much work to do to turn our vision into reality. The Secretary-General expects that the Summit will provide the political impetus for stakeholders to take forward and implement the commitments that they have made.

Whereas 2015 will be remembered for setting new frameworks, 2016 will be assessed by its ability to start translating these into action. We need to depart Istanbul with a clear and urgent sense of how to take forward the next steps on this agenda.

As you all know, the lead-up to the Summit will not involve an intergovernmental process, because it is important that the preparations remain open to a broad range of stakeholders. But, in the wake of Istanbul, member-States may wish to consider using the General Assembly and ECOSOC as an avenue for inter-governmental follow-up on the Summit. The ECOSOC humanitarian affairs segment on 20-22 June 2016 could be an early and important opportunity for such discussions. We stand ready to support Member States in any way required in the post-Summit period.

Let me conclude by thanking again all those countries that so kindly hosted regional and global consultations for the Summit, and to warmly thank the Turkish Government and the people of Turkey for inviting us all to Istanbul next year.

Turkey's enthusiasm and commitment to providing the platform for our first-ever World Humanitarian Summit is boundless. Throughout history, Istanbul has always stood as a bridge between East and West, north and south. Today, it is very much on the front line of some of the challenges that the Summit will aim to address. The city will provide an ideal setting for this important event.

Thank you very much.