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NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: MANAGING RISKS & CRISES DIFFERENTLY

HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE

Core Responsibility Four of the Agenda for Humanity

**“Anticipate,
do not wait
for crisis”**

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 "Managing Risks and Crises Differently" addresses Core Responsibility Four of the Agenda for Humanity.

CONTEXT

Typhoons, floods, droughts, earthquakes and other natural hazards continue to cause massive loss of life and livelihoods. Over the last 20 years, disasters caused by natural hazards have claimed 1.35 million lives and affected on average 218 million people per year, mostly in developing countries. Economic losses now reach \$250–\$300 billion a year. Yet the majority of today's hazards are predictable, and therefore it is possible to prevent their devastating impacts.

Between 2008 and 2014 a total of 184 million people were displaced by disasters, an average of 26.4 million newly displaced per year. With more extreme weather events due to climate change, these disasters are becoming more frequent and intense, with devastating humanitarian consequences. The impacts of El Niño are having major humanitarian consequences across all regions. Climate change threatens to impede sustainable development and increase instability and displacement.

Must these hazards result in huge suffering, particularly if they are recurrent and predictable? The Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity calls for a new way to manage and prepare for disasters, shifting from reactively managing crises to proactively managing risks.

There is much more we must do to understand, anticipate and reduce risks, and to do this in a more collective way between humanitarian, development and climate change communities. When hazards strike, pre-planned and pre-financed domestic capacity and response is often the best way to save lives and reduce losses. International assistance plays an important role but must be better managed to ensure it complements domestic efforts. Investing in community resilience, and local and national disaster risk management capacities is imperative, resulting in an approach that is 'as local as possible, as international as necessary.' It requires well thought-out procedures for facilitating international assistance, increased investments in risk reduction and new partnerships, including with the private sector. It also needs pre-agreement on who will finance this planned action and how these resources will be channelled to reach the people affected by disasters quickly.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on "Managing Risks and Crises Differently" is to build on global agreements in 2015 to commit to a more collective approach to managing risks, and increasing investments in preparedness, reinforcing national and local systems, and agreeing clear responsibilities, triggers and guaranteed finance for early action.

In line with the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity, the roundtable will address the following questions and seek concrete commitments from leaders on questions such as:

- *What more can be done to improve the understanding, anticipation and management of risks, including through more collective engagement between humanitarian, development and climate change communities?*
- *What is required to significantly reinforce community resilience?*

- *How can local, regional and international actors work better together to strengthen preparedness, response capacities and risk financing?*
- *How can we better facilitate private sector engagement in preparedness and response?*

In answering these questions, leaders at the roundtable are expected to offer commitments which operationalize the Agenda for Humanity, for instance through a comprehensive action plan and investment to significantly strengthen resilience, preparedness, response capacities and risk financing, particularly for the most risk-prone countries by 2020, which leverages the comparative advantage of different partners. The commitments could expand bilateral co-operation mechanisms for deployable capacities, establish a stronger network of crisis management centers to facilitate co-operation within and between regions, create national, regional and industry-level networks to facilitate private sector engagement in preparedness and response, strengthen partnerships with science and risk modelling to better understand and manage potential risks and create dedicated national and regionally-led platforms for dialogue between humanitarian and other actors.

Through joint action and mutual accountability, leaders can commit to reducing the impact of disasters on vulnerable people.

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 Four of the Agenda for Humanity. Please register your interest in the roundtable and the level of participation you envisage for this event at disasters.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.