



WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

ISTANBUL • 23-24 May 2016

Connecting Business

SPECIAL SESSION

Core Responsibility Five of the Agenda for Humanity



“I encourage business leaders to use their knowledge, technology and individual influence and leverage to promote sustainable solutions that bring stability and dignity to people’s lives.”

Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit

CONTEXT

Private sector actors have much to offer in terms of improving humanitarian response, from use of new technologies to expanding distribution networks, to more cost efficient delivery mechanisms. With the scale of humanitarian need fast outpacing the ability of traditional actors to respond, it is more important than ever for traditional humanitarian actors to work together with businesses to create more resilient communities and increase local capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises.

Businesses themselves are often affected by natural disaster, conflict and protracted crisis. Businesses are an integral part of the communities in which they operate, and the health of the community is inextricably linked to the health of the business. As such, businesses operating in high-risk and crisis-affected contexts are natural partners in preparing for and preventing crises, and in delivering assistance when disaster strikes.

Where we have seen public-private partnerships and business-to-business engagement in humanitarian crises, these have had major positive humanitarian impacts. But the opportunity is not being maximized, and collaboration is still the exception and not the norm. We must better understand how to replicate and scale up existing best practice for partnership. More must be done to work effectively with private sector partners before crisis strikes, improving disaster preparedness.



More thought must be given to how we strengthen partnerships with the private sector during early recovery, to ensure they are able to play a full and constructive role in longer term recovery and development.

Despite some good examples of joint working, humanitarian actors and the private sector still struggle to engage fully, at the right point in the crisis, and as effectively as they should.

Businesses and other humanitarian actors have called for the creation of business networks at national and regional levels to facilitate private sector engagement, and to address the challenges above. A global mechanism is required to support the creation of these business networks and to connect those networks to each other and to other humanitarian actors. Businesses are also calling for a clear entry-point for business into the humanitarian system.

Building on the momentum generated by the World Humanitarian Summit Process, businesses, Member States, civil society organizations, and humanitarian and development organizations are joining forces to launch the Connecting Business initiative: a multi-stakeholder initiative that will transform public-private partnerships and business engagement in disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, response and recovery by increasing the scale and effectiveness of business engagement in a coordinated manner.

OBJECTIVE

This Special Session will launch and generate commitments for the Connecting Business initiative. This initiative aims to transform business engagement and public-private collaboration by:

- strengthening existing effective networks that engage businesses for resilience, response and recovery, and replicating those structures in high-risk locations
- facilitating access to tools and resources to help businesses to effectively engage; fostering spaces for businesses, international organizations, Member States, civil society and local communities to come together around co-creation projects
- connecting businesses through a global portal that provides a clear entry point for private sector organisations

The Special event will showcase business networks already making an impact in humanitarian crisis, advocate for this transformational model of business-to-business engagement and public-private collaboration, and secure commitments to support the initiative and ensure its sustainability. Commitments are sought from businesses, Member States, civil society organizations and other actors to: 1) create, sponsor and participate in business networks; 2) engage with business networks and through the



global portal to form partnerships, share best practices, match needs to resources and systematically engage on issues of common interest; 3) provide funding or pro bono services to support the Connecting Business initiative; and 4) champion business engagement in disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

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 generated a call for change in how the international community addresses humanitarian need and suffering and called for a renewed commitment to humanity. 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 Special Sessions respond to the specific calls made during the consultation process. They will focus on launching strategic initiatives underlying the five core responsibilities. These initiatives aim to harness the vision, skills and capacities of stakeholders in each relevant area. Istanbul is the opportunity to demonstrate unity and solidarity with the needy, to prevent and end suffering, and to take all the necessary steps to place our common values of humanity back at the heart of the decision-making process.

The Special Sessions will provide a platform for Member States and other stakeholders to make specific commitments in support of these and as a means of achieving the Agenda for Humanity.

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

The Special Session will be a moderated discussion including the launch of the Connecting Business initiative. There will be the opportunity for stakeholders to announce commitments in support of the initiative. The Connecting Business initiative will work with stakeholders after the WHS to continue its work and take forward their commitments.

It will produce a summary document including all the commitments made during the session. This will contribute to the Commitments to Action document from the World Humanitarian Summit.

This Special Session will last for one hour. Given the length of the session, there will not be time for all participants to announce specific commitments. Therefore they will be asked to share their commitments in support of the Connecting Business initiative



before or during the Summit.

The Special Sessions 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 SPECIAL SESSION PREPARATIONS

The focal point will engage with interested stakeholders in the run-up to the Summit to assist in the development of commitments. Please refer any queries related to this session to Matthew Hochbrueckner at privatesector.session@whsummit.org. As part of the online registration process for the Summit there will be the opportunity to register to attend this session. Details on registration will be circulated to all invitees in the coming weeks.