



WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

ISTANBUL • 23-24 May 2016

Transforming Humanitarian Action with and for Young People

SPECIAL SESSION

Core Responsibility Three of the Agenda for Humanity

“I call upon young people — our future leaders and innovators — to participate, to organize and to bring new ideas. Matters of war and peace, of human suffering and development, cannot be left only to diplomats.”

Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit

CONTEXT

Today, 50 per cent of the 1.4 billion people living in countries impacted by crises and fragility are under the age of 20. These crises can erode protective familial and social ties and place young people at greater risk for poverty, violence, and abuse. Young girls are particularly vulnerable to these risks, which can compromise their development, violate their rights and undermine their future and the future of their country. Years of enduring conflict and exposure to violence and displacement can leave young people under extreme stress, at risks of exploitation and with little hope for the future.

Despite the particular vulnerability of young people in humanitarian settings, their specific needs are often missed and they have very little agency in the provision of international assistance. Unless their voices are heard and their evolving capabilities to participate in decision making acknowledged, young people will continue to be left behind.

The Secretary-General’s Agenda for Humanity recognizes that protecting the rights and addressing the specific needs of young people, including adolescents, and engaging them meaningfully in humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery is vital to humanitarian effectiveness and risk reduction.

At the World Humanitarian Summit’s Global Youth Consultation in Doha, young people called for the specific and deliberate inclusion of young women and men as official actors in all stages of humanitarian action.



Youth actors identified as priorities for reform a number of issues including: localisation of humanitarian response, better financial frameworks, more accountability of humanitarian action, continued delivery of essential services and better use of technology.

The World Humanitarian Summit provides an unprecedented opportunity to put in place mechanisms to guarantee that the priorities and participation of young people are addressed by the humanitarian system. This Special Session will bring together global leaders of all ages to respond to the United Nations Secretary General's call to demonstrate decisive and sustained leadership to enable the humanitarian system to better meet the particular needs of adolescents and youth.

OBJECTIVE

Building on the Global Youth Consultation in Doha, this Special Session will galvanize action from all stakeholders, including Member States, the UN system, civil society and other partners to finally and, for the first time, officially engage young people in humanitarian action at all levels.

The Special Session will invite solutions from participants to the following issues:

- What programmatic, policy and financial measures are needed to respond to the specific needs of adolescents and youth in emergencies including access to specialized and targeted age appropriate programmes?
- How can young people's capacities as humanitarian actors and equal stakeholders in humanitarian preparedness, response, recovery, and decision making be recognized and utilized throughout the humanitarian-development continuum?
- How can we achieve system-wide accountability for investments in young people and track the implementation of priorities for adolescent and youth in humanitarian settings?

Participants in this Special Session are expected to offer commitments to enable adolescent and youth to be agents of positive change. The concrete commitments made during this session should support the empowerment of young people as actors in humanitarian response and promote the leadership of young people in national, local and international humanitarian and development programmes and processes.

The Special Session will launch an inclusive multi-stakeholder platform on young people in humanitarian action that will build upon the work of existing inter-agency groups that will include a 'youth compact' to help ensure that affected (and host community) youth are consulted, informed and engaged in humanitarian response. The session will also garner support and commitment towards putting systems in place to:

- track dedicated funding for adolescent and youth programming; and
- track and report on the percentage of the global budget that is spent on adolescents



and youth

BACKGROUND

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit will take place from 23 to 24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. Following three years of extensive consultations with more than 23,000 people in 153 countries, this will be the moment to answer their overwhelming call 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 endorse and get behind five core responsibilities. These will ensure that we can deliver more and better on behalf of all those who are suffering and who need assistance. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity spells out how this can be achieved.

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 consist of a moderated roundtable discussion of a number of actors including youth representatives. The Special Session will result in a summary document that will include the individual and collective commitments made during the Session and will contribute to the Commitments to Action document of the World Humanitarian Summit.

This Special Event 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 this Special Session 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 Danielle Engel at youth.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.