



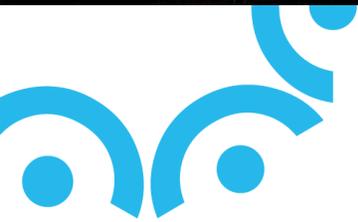
WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

ISTANBUL • 23-24 May 2016

Regional Action for Global Challenges

SPECIAL SESSION

All Core Responsibilities of the Agenda for Humanity



“Time and again, disunity at the early stages of a crisis can stall engagement, with disastrous consequences. The lack of early and unified political messaging at the regional and international level has often led to tragic results.”

Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit

CONTEXT

Regional inter-governmental organizations from the Americas to Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific are playing an increasingly visible role in humanitarian action. While it is often stated that regional organizations are an ‘emerging’ humanitarian actor, many have in fact been involved for many years in numerous areas, including disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, humanitarian coordination and aid delivery, and in a variety of crises, ranging from natural disasters and conflicts through to epidemics such as Ebola.

Over the last two decades, we have seen a dramatic increase in the establishment of distinct humanitarian capacities within Regional Organizations. In 1990 there were only five regional organizations with dedicated humanitarian capacity. By 2015 this number had grown to 30. These institutions understand their regions better and have broadly shared cultures and, in some cases, shared languages. They are also directly impacted by – and thus have a greater incentive to address – trans-national issues in their neighbourhood, whether major disasters, environmental challenges, refugee flows or conflicts with a potential to spill across borders. Regional Organizations are also involved in peace mediation and peace support operations.

Regional Organizations offer governments and humanitarian agencies another option to pursue when responding to crises based on the particular conditions on the ground.



They add another tool to the toolbox, which is one reason why many countries belong to two, three or even more regional organizations. Where regional organizations are involved in peace processes, they have called for opening of humanitarian space and durable solutions for displaced populations.

Recognizing the important role that regional entities can play in humanitarian crisis, the *Regional Organizations Humanitarian Action Network* (ROHAN) was established in 2015. ROHAN is an informal network of 14 regional organizations working in humanitarian action.

OBJECTIVE

The session will allow high-level representatives of Regional Organizations and other stakeholders to present examples of regional approaches to recent crises and identify challenges and opportunities for regional organizations in the evolving humanitarian system. Presentations, interventions and commitments will introduce concrete steps towards improved coordination and cooperation between regional organizations and other stakeholders in the context of the evolving humanitarian architecture.

The Regional Action for Global Challenges Session will mark the formal launch of ROHAN, with participation by leaders of the key regional organizations involved in this network. As with other high-level sessions at the Summit, commitments will be sought in support of the Agenda for Humanity. Along with these commitments, it is proposed that this session seek commitments by Regional Organizations and their Member States to formalising the role of regional organizations within the humanitarian architecture, for example through the UN General Assembly.

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 one-hour Special Session will be a moderated roundtable discussion, inviting stakeholders to make commitments in support of ROHAN. The Special Session's summary document will contribute to the Commitments to Action document.

The Special Sessions will be open to media 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 seek support for this initiative and assist in the development of commitments. Please refer any queries related to this session to Jeremy Wellard at regionalorganisations.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.