



WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

ISTANBUL • 23-24 May 2016

Inclusion of persons with disabilities into humanitarian action

SPECIAL SESSION

Core Responsibility Three of the Agenda for Humanity



**“Honouring our
commitment to
leave no one
behind requires
reaching everyone
in situations of
conflict, disasters,
vulnerability and
risk.”**

**Report of the
Secretary-General for
the World
Humanitarian Summit**

CONTEXT

The one billion persons with physical and/or mental disabilities worldwide—of whom 80% live in the Global South—are among the most marginalized in crisis-affected communities, disproportionately impacted by disaster and conflict due to entrenched discrimination and barriers that restrict access to available services, the physical environment, transportation and information and communication services. This restricts access to, and participation in, humanitarian programming and response. Furthermore, the collapse of support structures and social protection networks during crisis exacerbates the impact of these situations on those who rely on them the most.

A recent global study conducted as part of the WHS consultations highlighted that during a humanitarian crisis, three quarters of respondents with disabilities were unable to access appropriate basic assistance, including water, shelter, food, health or education services, while half reported no access to services specific to persons with disabilities. Limited data on people with disabilities in crisis situations further restricts access to life-saving relief and recovery support, while conflicts and natural disasters increase the number of people with new impairments for whom it is crucial to ensure access to services. Research has shown that women and girls with disabilities are at heightened risk of violence, including sexual and domestic abuse, exploitation and discrimination, while children and youth with disabilities disproportionately experience a lack of access to education.



Awareness of the particular needs and vulnerability of persons with disabilities is gradually increasing, and humanitarian agencies are increasingly adopting internal policies and tools to support their actions. However, persons with disabilities are rarely included in operational and decision-making processes that impact their lives. In addition, system-wide policy and operational frameworks do not yet exist to ensure a coherent, accountable and effective approach towards inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

OBJECTIVE

This Special Session will advance global political commitments and concrete actions to make humanitarian action more inclusive of persons with disabilities, ensuring that the World Humanitarian Summit priority to “leave no one behind” is realized in Istanbul and beyond.

It will serve as a forum to launch a Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and to announce concrete commitments to implement the Charter. These could include measures to: build on the leadership and capacity of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations by increasing the proportion of humanitarian actors that routinely include these partners in design, planning, implementation and monitoring of humanitarian programs; develop and launch globally-endorsed standards and guidelines to support humanitarian action inclusive of persons with disabilities; increase the proportion of humanitarian actors that provide disability-inclusive training to their staff; increase the number of humanitarian actors that have mainstreamed disability in their policies, programs and practices; and ensure an appropriate share of funding is dedicated to inclusive emergency mechanisms and programs.

The Charter will galvanize political commitment to act and will be complemented by an action plan outlining key steps needed to achieve change. The roadmap will include targets and benchmarks to monitor progress in making humanitarian action more inclusive of persons with disabilities over the next three years and beyond.

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 moderate roundtable discussion, including representatives of affected communities. 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 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 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 Isabelle de Muysier-Boucher at disability.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.