



**WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT**

ISTANBUL • 23-24 May 2016

## Global Health

### SPECIAL SESSION

Core Responsibility Three of the Agenda for Humanity



**“An end to human suffering requires political solutions, unity of purpose, sustained leadership and investment in inclusive and peaceful societies.”**

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

### CONTEXT

Preserving and protecting health is a primary goal of humanitarian action. In order to achieve this, the gap between emergency health (including outbreak response) and humanitarian response mechanisms must be closed. Achieving universal health coverage for the billion people who are most affected by and vulnerable to crises requires far closer cooperation between the two systems and a commitment by humanitarians, development actors and other stakeholders to work together in a more cohesive and comprehensive manner.

Better coordination is required in areas which include water and sanitation, nutrition, food security and shelter. Reproductive health, mental health, the needs of survivors of gender violence, people with chronic ailments and the elderly and disabled are all areas which need to be addressed.

The Secretary General’s High-level Panel report on Protecting Humanity from Future Health Crises highlights the challenge from diseases with the potential to generate humanitarian crises. Examples of these include SARS, avian influenza and Ebola Virus Disease. The high risk of future crises being caused by new or resurgent pathogens is further increased by greater urbanization, population mobility and climate change.



Crises cause displacement. People forced to move under difficult conditions face significant health challenges. Their increased vulnerability places more burdens on the health services of host communities. The precarious health status of people who are barely coping in crises is further compromised by the impact of broader trends such as urbanization, climate change and periodic phenomena such as El Nino. All countries are vulnerable to health crises and those with weak health system capacities are particularly challenged by the need to detect, prevent, prepare, respond and recover.

The gap between relief and development has a significant impact, especially during protracted crises where there are divisions between national and international health institutions and where development actors are slow to re-engage. These factors, along with unreliable health delivery mechanisms, significantly slow down appropriate crisis responses.

Gaps in pandemic preparedness plans, disease monitoring and information sharing, health systems, and knowledge and skills among health workers and humanitarian workers need to be urgently addressed. Better trained local community health workers would be the first and best line of defence against outbreaks and epidemics.

## OBJECTIVE

This Special Session will present a new “Global Accord on Healthcare for Crisis-affected People”. This Accord provides a framework for the better handling of threats to health in acute and protracted crises. It seeks to ensure the delivery of a minimum essential package of health services adapted to the needs of specific crisis contexts. The Accord brings together health, humanitarian, development, environmental, peacebuilding and other related actors to work collaboratively in two key areas:

- **Build national core capacities** for implementing the International Health Regulations as part of strengthening national health systems. This would strengthen national arrangements for managing risks, containing outbreaks and responding to health crises through scaling up investments in disease surveillance, prevention, preparedness, and rapid response capabilities.
- **Improve the reliability of collective health emergency response arrangements** by transforming international health cooperation through systemic changes that clarify responsibilities and accountability, attract greater investment in essential tools, establish more robust regional and global sharing mechanisms, and reach agreement on common needs assessments, open data management and shared response strategies.

Participants will announce individual or joint commitments that will contribute to this Accord.



## 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

This session will be a moderated panel discussion, resulting in a statement that will include the key elements of a Global Accord on Healthcare for Crisis-affected People. This will contribute to the Commitments to Action document of the World Humanitarian Summit.

This Special Session will last for one hour. Participants are asked to share their commitments before or during the Summit. Commitments made prior to the Summit will be given visibility during the Special Session. The Special Sessions will be open to media and will be webcast. 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 Mukesh Kapila at [globalhealth.session@whsummit.org](mailto:globalhealth.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.