



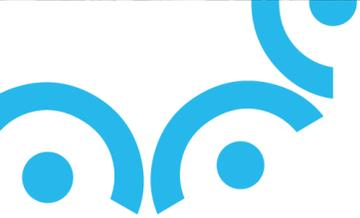
**WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT**

ISTANBUL • 23-24 May 2016

# Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation

## SPECIAL SESSION

Core Responsibilities Four and Five of the Agenda for Humanity



**“Collective outcomes will require a new level of collaboration among diverse groups of stakeholders, based on comparative advantage.”**

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

## CONTEXT

The challenges faced by humanitarian actors are changing rapidly but our collective ability to embrace innovative approaches and implement these at scale is limited. The need for humanitarian actors to improve and scale up their adoption of innovative solutions and approaches to address complex challenges was highlighted throughout the WHS consultation process as a key impediment to progress. In a rapidly evolving landscape, effective and principled humanitarian response requires continuous innovation to empower affected people, respond to their needs, solve problems, leverage all relevant expertise and effectively use all available resources. Innovation should become an integral part of the humanitarian business model, with incentives for humanitarian actors to continually improve and adapt the services they provide to affected people. Engagement with those outside the mainstream humanitarian sector, including business, academia and the research and scientific community, is vital for adapting best practices and exploring new solutions. To date, however, the ability to scale innovations remains significantly short of what is needed.

The humanitarian system still suffers from a duplication and fragmentation of investments, resource constraints and the existence of significant barriers to innovation. There is an absence of prioritisation with regard to the types of humanitarian challenges that need to be addressed collectively through innovation and taken to scale.



Many business and academic leaders, particularly those at the national levels, with solutions to offer are overwhelmed by the maze of humanitarian organisations and encounter many barriers to entry. There is a failure to reach into affected communities to leverage local solutions. Innovative solutions that might be applied across sectors remain trapped in silos – within humanitarian agencies and at different levels of response. These challenges point to the need for a structure capable of delivering coherence and wider engagement, not only within the humanitarian system but also with those who might not currently be involved in humanitarian action but who are willing and eager to contribute their skills and innovations.

## OBJECTIVE

This Special Session will result in a range of concrete commitments as part of the global efforts to boost innovation, change and adaptation in the humanitarian sector. This will include the launch of the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI) which aims to turn ideas into action by promoting innovative tools and practices in humanitarian preparedness and response. This new alliance will bring together people and organisations from across different areas and with different expertise to collaborate on innovative and transformative solutions to the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. It will mark the starting point of a shift to how humanitarians collectively engage with those outside their traditional circles, through an alliance approach with a common goal: to overcome humanitarian challenges by using innovation to build bridges between actors with different comparative advantages in order to ensure that the right assistance reaches the people who need it. The GAHI's purpose is to address the innovation needs of the humanitarian sector which cannot be effectively tackled in isolation or by individual actors working on their own. By stocktaking and connecting existing initiatives, associations and networks under the umbrella of a global alliance and matching their capacities against our shared humanitarian challenges, the GAHI can ensure that efforts in addressing humanitarian challenges are not duplicated but instead build on existing solutions.

The World Humanitarian Summit offers the opportunity to launch the GAHI on a high-level platform, leveraging both the presence and commitment of world leaders. The range of commitments could include: supporting the GAHI as a key mechanism for prioritising innovation and as a vehicle for supporting a new business model within the humanitarian sector; the promotion of specific targets for expenditure on innovation and R&D as a global best practice amongst partner organizations; programming towards measurable outcomes; championing of innovations and approaches that can be replicated and scaled globally; promoting the adoption of innovative products and processes; developing and leading practice groups for promoting specific innovations in response to humanitarian challenges; leveraging existing networks and solutions for the purposes of supporting the priorities of the GAHI; sharing lessons learned, best practices and evidence in a transparent manner with respect to innovation.



## 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 panel of leaders who will launch the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation and demonstrate how other initiatives will link with and leverage the GAHI. A summary document will be prepared, including the individual and collective commitments made during the Session and a way forward in this critical area, which will contribute to the Commitments to Action document of the World Humanitarian Summit.

This Special Event will last for one hour. As there may not be sufficient time for all participants to announce their commitments they will be asked to share them before or during the Summit. 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 assist in the development of commitments. Please refer any queries related to this session to Mahsa Jafari at [innovation.session@whsummit.org](mailto:innovation.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.