

“Without sufficient resources, the Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs cannot save lives or protect civilians”.

[World Humanitarian Summit Istanbul 23-24 May 2016](#)

The journey to Istanbul is picking up tremendous momentum. The World Humanitarian Summit, which aims to reduce human loss and suffering from crises is a call to action by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and it will take place in Istanbul on the 23rd -24th May 2016. The main objective of the summit is to bring all stakeholders together to try find the solution as how to respond effectively the humanitarian challenges of the 21st century. The Summit will set an agenda for change to make humanitarian action fit for the great challenges, global issues that we face now and in the future.

The preparatory consultations targeting humanitarian actors and disaster-affected communities took place in Auckland city the 30th June – 2nd July. Likewise, the invited representatives from sectors across the region discussed key humanitarian issues that affect the pacific region and identified the way forward. The consultations sought views from a wide range of stakeholders, including communities, businesses, NGOs, academics and governments across the Pacific. This included American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Island, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

During the consultation, the participants discussed the priorities and recommendations of all stakeholders on what must be done to make humanitarian action fit for the future. In addition, participants set out the evidence and demonstrated the groundswell of support for change that puts people at the heart of the global humanitarian agenda. Furthermore, the stakeholders focused on the following four key issues recommended by the Office Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:

The humanitarian effectiveness: The Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs and stakeholders’ ll explore how to meet the humanitarian needs of all people with timely and appropriate aid that is delivered in a sustainable manner, by those best placed to meet those needs.

Reduce vulnerability and managing risk: The office of coordination for Humanitarian Affairs and stakeholders aim to support countries and communities build resilience to the changing nature of shocks and stresses. This includes for recurrent and predictable shocks, but also for the uncertainties of the future Transformation through the innovation: This will focus one introducing new ideas and methods in flexible, uncommon ways. Put differently, innovation is an umbrella term for concerted efforts to respond to new challenges or changing context.

The Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs and stakeholders will improve existing programs or integrate new developments from other sectors, such as advanced technologies. The Transformation through Innovation theme therefore aims to bring about a major drive and commitment to invest in the proposed models for an effective humanitarian innovation eco-system in order to research, develop and scale up new and/or improved models that realize breakthroughs to humanitarian challenges.

Serving the needs of people of the conflicts: The Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs believes global issues such massive replacement of refugees, large scale of earthquake, intensity of natural disasters such flood and windstorms continue to create immense humanitarian need. Likewise Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs believes that working under sudden disasters requires not only a humanitarian response but also the effective strategies and protection to people affected.

According to the preliminary consultation of the summit, there is a clear call for the respect of international humanitarian law and to monitor its application; that we must hold violators to account. One of the major themes of the entire consultation process has been for increased capacity, including funding to local actors. It is clear that many humanitarian responses stakeholders and communities need real progress on giving first responders the support they need to enable them to take the lead in preparedness, response and recovery. So far, the consultations outcomes have been positive. For instance, there has been as strong call to providing financing to enable refugees and host communities to live dignified lives.

The Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs believes that is one of tangible examples of how the UN members of states can bring humanitarian and development expertise to support people in a holistic way. Likewise, initial consultation outcomes has indicated that there has been a clarion call for adequate, predictable finance for humanitarian action, and for the allocation of resources to be based on need. That is critical because **“without sufficient resources, the Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs cannot save lives or protect civilians”**.

Humanitarian and Disaster Response

What is humanitarian response?

According to the New Zealand NGO Disaster relief, the humanitarian response is an assistance provided to afflicted populations in humanitarian crises, including rapid or slow onset natural disasters and conflicts. The primary objectives are saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity. It is distinct from development in that its duration is typically limited and its implementation is guided by a number of specific humanitarian standards.

Humanitarian response operations are by nature highly complex, and depending on the scale of the crisis can often involve the participation of a large number of governments, multilateral organizations and international NGOs. Response activities can include provision of emergency health, including medical supplies, food and water, shelter, protection, psychosocial support and support services, such as coordination, logistics and communication. Other activities in humanitarian response include disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities such as prepositioning of stock and contingency planning in preparation for potential future disasters.

Good practice in disaster response: Given the diverse and complex nature of humanitarian emergencies, there is no straightforward solution or single best practice model for humanitarian agencies to utilize. Rather, stakeholders must continually adapt their models of response to events on the ground. Nonetheless, the international community has grown in its capacity to respond effectively to humanitarian crises by adapting general practices resulting from evaluations of previous methods of response.

Under the International Humanitarian Law there is a code that actors must adhere to in their emergency and disaster response work. The code particularly endorses the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, along with the concept of “humanitarian imperative” – the right to receive and to give

humanitarian assistance. It states the obligation of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed.