



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

As delivered

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It is a great honour and pleasure to be here today and speak at the 2015 Humanitarian Policy Forum organized by the Korean NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC) on the future of humanitarian action around the world.

It is especially apt that we are having this discussion here in Seoul about the future of humanitarian action. The Republic of Korea has transformed itself from a war-ravaged basket case of a country to a prosperous democratic society and an emerging donor of international aid, thereby setting a model for many developing countries to emulate.

I believe one vital aspect of South Korea's transformation has been the rise of civil society and the activism of non-governmental organizations in all areas of public life, including in humanitarian assistance. And I am deeply grateful to see that this is now reaching far beyond the country to people in need in the far corners of the world. I thank all of you here for your leadership and commitment in this regard. I also thank the foreign friends and colleagues who have come to share their experience and knowledge.

The global humanitarian system as a whole is indeed at a crossroads. Around the world, from Sudan to Syria, DR Congo to Palestine, Colombia and the DPRK, Somalia to the Philippines, natural disasters, civil strife and conflict are overwhelming the global aid community, compelling us to examine what we should be doing to better meet and reduce humanitarian needs.

The world is facing a record-breaking 60 million people forcibly displaced by wars and violence - half of whom are women, and most of whom are finding refuge in urban areas, not in camp settings. The number of refugees and displaced people is rising and the length of stay in host countries is also increasing. More than three quarters of displaced people have been living away from home for more than 7 years. They live in "second exile," caught between their inability to return to their homes and a lack of lasting solutions, like education and employment opportunities, where they are living.

Since 2008 the number of major violent conflicts has almost tripled. As a telling sign, some 80 per cent of emergency response coordinated by the UN is undertaken in protracted conflict-affected situations.

The number of people targeted for international assistance has doubled in the last ten years, from 38 million in 2004 to 76 million in 2014. During the same period, the amount of funding required for humanitarian appeals grew by 600 per cent, from \$3 billion to \$18 billion. Donors have provided more funds over the years, but the gap between what is requested and what is received has widened, to the tune of about \$7 billion at the end of 2014, or 40 per cent of the appeals. The gap at the end of this year is projected to be around \$12 billion, out of around \$20 billion in total appeals. That means \$12 billion worth of unmet humanitarian needs.

In addition, today's crises are lasting longer than ever before. Humanitarian inter-agency appeals, which present a unified annual plan for humanitarian operations in a country, last for an average of seven consecutive years. Protracted crises require large amounts of funding: in the last ten years, three crises – in Sudan, DRC, and Somalia – have accounted for 50 per cent of all appeal funding.

These figures tell part of the story – but it is the human cost which is so heartbreaking. It is ordinary children, women, men who bear the brunt of humanitarian crises. For example, the countries in the Horn of Africa have been buffeted from crisis to crisis over the past two decades. More than 200,000 people died in the famine in Somalia in 2013. In the Sahel region of West Africa, even when the rains are good, half a million children die from nutrition-related causes every year.

We face multiple challenges which contribute to fragility and vulnerability of people, and many of the trends point to a deterioration in the next years and decades. Population growth means that crises are likely to persist and to get worse as people compete for space, resources and recognition. Urbanization, the effects of climate change, growing inequality – all these are contributing to unprecedented humanitarian needs.

Faced with these challenges, humanitarian actors have been striving to diversify and build new partnerships and alliances.

Organizations and agencies from the Global South and the Islamic world, many of which have existed for decades, are taking on regional and international roles, as we see in Somalia and Syria. These partners are bringing expertise, experience and a different way of looking at the work.

And if we don't work together and co-ordinate effectively, chaos and fragmentation could ensue - with duplication of effort and lack of a coherent approach. OCHA undertakes its coordination role through a committee established by the UN General Assembly called the IASC, which includes UN humanitarian agencies and major international NGOs, and there is still little involvement with organizations from the Global South or Gulf countries. This needs to change, and I am glad to see you are devoting a session to the rise of new actors and changing dynamics in humanitarian aid.

And whilst we grapple with ongoing operational challenges, we must also think about how to prepare for the future. We may face crises of a kind we have never seen before. For example, how can we systematize and prepare for emergency response when a natural disaster triggers an industrial emergency, as happened in Fukushima? How can we respond effectively and predictably to fast-spreading epidemics like Ebola? How can

humanitarian response link scientific and technological knowledge and understanding with policy and practice, and how can we strengthen local capacity to respond to shocks.

Crucially, existing humanitarian agencies and organizations need to see themselves as part of a larger picture, not only working more closely with development partners but understanding our position relative to the impact of climate change, human rights, and even peace and security.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2015 is a landmark year for the United Nations. It is our 70th anniversary, it marks the culmination of 15 years of work on the Millennium Development Goals, and the start of the Sustainable Development Goals that were agreed in New York last month.

I know that many of you around this room have been actively involved in achieving the MDGs and are now considering how you can support efforts to attain the SDGs.

The SDGs are universal. They aim to meet critical development challenges, but they are also concerned with the most vulnerable, highlighted in the goal of leaving no one behind and starting with those furthest behind first. This speaks to the fact that far too many people around the world cannot escape poverty and civil strife.

The SDG's promise of eradicating poverty and eliminating hunger around the world by 2030 will not be achieved without focused attention and assistance directed at the 100 million around the world in need of humanitarian assistance. Achieving SDG 16 on peaceful societies will be especially important if we are to break the cycle of conflict and crisis, and help to ensure that forcible displacement by war and violence is no longer a life sentence.

And in order to reach these 100 million women, men, boys and girls and lift them out of poverty and hunger so that they can benefit from mainstream development, we must change the way we approach humanitarian and development assistance.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit has been called for by the Secretary-General to re-inspire and re-invigorate the world with the fundamental tenets of humanitarian work, as a global rallying call for humanity, putting principles and affected people at the center of humanitarian action. It will also be a point of departure for world leaders and stakeholders to agree to commitments and take collective action. It will be the first opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to the SDG's pledge to leave no one behind.

In the lead-up to the Summit, our consultations around the world with over 23,000 people from all walks of life – aid workers, policy makers, diaspora, private sector, military, bankers, regional organizations, young people, and affected people themselves – showed that there is a global call for a shift in how we address humanitarian needs.

The changes can be grouped into five broad areas. First, humanitarian action must put people at its heart, empowering them to cope and recover with dignity and as the primary agents of their own response. Humanitarian work must deliver for women and girls, reach

everyone including older people and those with disabilities, must invest in youth and children, and must protect and enable people.

Second, protecting people is at the heart of humanitarian aid. Global leaders must step up political action to end conflict and violations of international humanitarian law.

Third, people called for greater focus on reaching solutions for people in crisis by building their resilience, through investment in preparedness, managing and mitigating risk, reducing vulnerability and finding durable solutions for protracted displacement. This is a clear area of common cause with the Sustainable Development Goals, and with peacebuilding.

Fourth, there was a call for more diverse and inclusive partnerships that reaffirm the core humanitarian principles, enable first responders to take a leadership role, and leverage the power of innovation. We need to ensure that everyone involved in humanitarian aid is working together and using the multiplying force of coordination. We need to form a global network of partnerships with the private sector, built on local and regional initiatives.

Fifth and finally, the consultations reinforced the importance of new and more diverse funding to provide resources for these initiatives. This includes domestic finance from governments, bilateral and multilateral contributions, remittances, insurance, private finance and contributions from the general public. There was a call for increased funding to local groups, particularly those representing women and girls, and for pooled funds managed by southern Non-Governmental Organizations.

Underlying all these areas is a recognition of the common value of humanity and a reaffirmation of the universality of the humanitarian principles.

We are now undertaking more detailed work on these emerging proposals and tools, to ensure that stakeholders rally around them at the Summit in May and beyond, and also preparing the SG's report that will set the tone of the Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In addition to the landmark agreement on the SDGs, this year has seen several global reviews, including the Peacebuilding Architecture Review, the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations and the ongoing Global Study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325); the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing; the High-Level Panel on Global Response to Health Crises; the Financing for Development discussions; the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction in March; and the upcoming Climate Change summit in Paris.

These various reforms, reviews and frameworks are shaping the future of global governance for years to come. There are a number of similarities and overlaps in the emerging recommendations that complement the five action areas I have described for the World Humanitarian Summit.

One common factor is the need for concerted and coherent action to manage global challenges holistically. Planning mechanisms must be multi-stakeholder and incorporate the contributions of a diverse set of actors over the short, medium and long term. The focus on prevention, risk management and resilience will have an impact on our response as one UN system to humanitarian emergencies, violent conflict, health crises and all types of shocks and stresses. Building this cooperation also requires using coordinated financial mechanisms to supply funds for the various programmes, tools and mechanisms involved.

And finally, we all know that development gains and social progress can be quickly lost when armed conflict breaks out. And once it does, humanitarians will strive to assist and protect those caught up in violence. But the solution lies with the political decision makers. Thus, a resounding appeal must be made to political leaders to prevent and end conflicts. In the emblematic conflicts of today, in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Ukraine and South Sudan, the appeal so far seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The WHS in Istanbul next year will be an vital opportunity to turn the tide and bring hope to the millions suffering in the endless violence.

All these global agendas highlight the need for coherent and holistic approaches. It is widely recognized that every part of this agenda holds elements of the solution to other parts. The World Humanitarian Summit, and all parts of this ambitious agenda, will require the support of Member States and of civil society to succeed.

I would like to emphasize that the Republic of Korea and its NGOs have an important role to play in achieving these goals.

I encourage you to engage with and impress upon UN partners to be more inclusive, dynamic and innovative, to be more open minded to new approaches and opportunities, and to partner with new and different organizations. I also urge you to expand your horizons and deepen your commitment to the principle of needs-based humanitarian action to the Central African Republic, Chad, the DRC, Somalia, Myanmar and many other places that call for your attention and support. I urge you to work closely with us as the coordinating body for humanitarian aid. Tell us what you are doing, how and with whom. Even if you are working outside the traditional cluster system, this information is vital if we are to use the funds available as efficiently as possible – and ensure that we have the greatest possible impact.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to our discussion and to hearing your ideas about how we can work together.