



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

**Remarks to Event marking World Humanitarian Day
New York, 18 August 2015**

As delivered

Good evening everyone, and welcome!

Thank you for being part of our celebration tonight. I am very pleased to be with you to mark my first World Humanitarian Day as Emergency Relief Coordinator, representing humanitarian organisations from all over the world, both within and outside the United Nations.

Shortly I will ask the Secretary-General to share his thoughts with us.

Tonight from United Nations Headquarters on the eve of World Humanitarian Day, we kick off events which will be taking place in countries all over the world tomorrow. Humanitarian colleagues in South Sudan and Syria, Chad and Yemen, Colombia and Mali, Nepal and in the Philippines, in Geneva and at the World Expo in Milan, and many other places will gather with local communities to mark the day around this year's theme, Share Humanity.

Tonight, I am very pleased that we will see and hear the moving story of Hanan, a mother of five and one of 1.1 million Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, from Leila Buck, a Lebanese American writer and performer.

Let us remember what brings us together: our shared commitment to the tens of millions of women, men and children who rely on life-saving assistance to survive. We celebrate the spirit that inspires humanitarian work around the world, and pay tribute to the bravery and commitment of humanitarian workers.

I thank each and every humanitarian worker, and their families, for their inspiring work.

Tonight is also a celebration of the values and principles that drive our actions: the humanitarian instinct to support people in need.

Our message this World Humanitarian Day is simple, but we believe it can lead to great change in the world. Share Humanity. Be generous, in spirit and deed. Take action to help those in greatest need. Help to create a more humane world.

In our volatile world there is an urgent need to realize a greater sense of responsibility to each other and develop a greater sense of global citizenship. Share Humanity. It's a simple message that we don't hear often enough.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We have a wonderful selection of performers from across the globe tonight to celebrate and create momentum for this campaign. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed, and in particular the United Arab Emirates for jointly hosting this event. I would also like to acknowledge with us here tonight Oliver Percovich, from Kabul Afghanistan. Oliver is the founder of Skateistan, the extraordinary youth skateboarding and education organisation helping make life better for many hundreds of Afghan young people since 2007, and now also in Cambodia and South Africa. Skateistan is a major partner in our global #ShareHumanity campaign.

Before we start, I would like to welcome to the stage the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Thank you, enjoy the night!