



High-level Opening Panel Risks, Threats and Challenges – The Growing Global Demand for Humanitarian Action

Thursday, December 9, 2021 | 09:00 - 10:00 am EST

Virtual Session - [Register Here](#)

Overview:

At the close of a year marked by great uncertainty and increasing divergence around socio-economic recovery following the unprecedented disruptions worldwide starting in 2020, a clear end of the COVID-19 pandemic is still not in sight. While many developed countries with access to vaccines struggle with vaccine hesitancy and social distrust, we see a near total lack of accessibility to vaccines in other parts of the world. Despite an increased vaccine supply, many countries with Humanitarian Response Plans are not expected to have sufficient coverage of their population until mid-2022 or later.

The impacts of COVID-19 on top of existing and compounding crises meant humanitarian needs were higher and further reaching than ever, with record numbers of displaced people and people in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide. The number of countries in protracted crises has doubled over the last six years.

The growing climate crisis is threatening to inundate national and international support systems and is increasingly turning into a global humanitarian crisis. On the frontlines of climate change, in many of those already most vulnerable countries, humanitarian workers witness, every day and everywhere, how the climate crisis is exacerbating vulnerabilities, is serving as a force multiplier for other global challenges and is creating new humanitarian “hotspots” where the humanitarian system was traditionally not or less active.

Continued and resurgent outbreaks of conflict remain the main driver of humanitarian needs worldwide. In this regard, humanitarian access continues to be a challenge in several crises and is increasingly used as a bargaining chip, with a devastating impact on populations in need. Terrorism, religious extremism, and organized crime are exploiting weak institutions and power vacuums to undermine state authority.

Opening the Forum and providing the global context for the following thematic discussions, panellist will share their perspectives on the current global landscape, marked by the climate crisis, the COVID 19 pandemic and lack of access to vaccines, the risks and fall out of rising geopolitical tensions and divisions, growing inequalities across countries including the debt crisis of many middle income and lower middle-income countries. The discussions will help relay a realistic picture and better understanding of the global environment ahead of us (the magnitude of challenges of developing countries; the compounding effects of multiple intersecting global challenges on communities vulnerability and needs; prospects and



projections) and the regional and global landscapes international aid organizations and financial institutions, local Governments and civil society, and private sector partners need to collaborate in.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the key intersecting health, geopolitical, social-economic and security challenges shaping the current global landscape, and how are they impacting the humanitarian operating environment?
- What are the key implications of these challenges - climate change, pandemic, growing inequalities - for the humanitarian system, their partners, and their ways of working?
- How are the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with its immediate health and secondary impacts intersecting with other global challenges, and changing the face of vulnerability of people in need?
- In light of ever-increasing needs and increasingly compounding crises, what are the key lessons learned around strategic crisis preparedness, and what are the necessary cross-sectoral partnerships to create synergies and more systematic cooperation between diverse actors?
- In the current geopolitical context, how do we lift ambition to support vulnerable countries and communities?

Moderator:

Femi Oke, Journalist and Broadcaster

Panellists:

- **Martin Griffiths**, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- **Dr. Ayoade Olatunbosun-Alakija**, Co-Chair, African Union's Africa Vaccine Delivery Alliance
- **Rachel Kyte**, Dean of The Fletcher School at Tufts University

Video message by H.E. Abdullah Shahid, President of the 76th United Nations General Assembly