HIGH LEVEL EVENT – AFGHANISTAN  
STATEMENT BY  
CARE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY GENERAL  
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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen and distinguished colleagues – I thank Secretary General Guterres for inviting me to share a brief message at this crucial meeting.

Let me start by sharing a quote from CARE’s Deputy Country Director in Afghanistan, Marianne O’Grady:

“By the time the hot Afghanistan sun has peaked over the horizon each morning, families have already contemplated tough questions – ‘How will we access food today? Will there be water to drink? Where will we sleep tonight? What does tomorrow hold?’”

CARE together with our international peers have been operating in Afghanistan for many decades in close partnership with Afghan civil society organisations. Collectively, we have over 30,000 dedicated male and female staff delivering lifesaving assistance across all sectors and in all provinces of the country.

With a long history of working side by side with communities from both urban cities to hard-to-reach rural areas, we have not only built the collective experience, agility and dedication to continue aid programming and scale it up, but also the local networks, partnerships and community acceptance that is so critical for us to do so.

So, while this current situation may seem complex and operationally challenging, it is not new for NGOs.

What is new is the scale of needs.

Afghanistan is suffering one of its worst-ever droughts. With one in three Afghans now facing crisis levels of food insecurity, rising inflation and a struggling health and social support system, Afghans are being dealt blow after blow.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the approaching winter brings yet more complexity to an already exhausted population, within which women and children are particularly affected.

To Member States and our UN partners present today, I want to emphasise three key areas that must be addressed if we are to effectively meet these needs at scale:

1. First, fund the appeal and fast-track flexible funding direct to humanitarian partners, including NGOs. This will enable us to scale up our response to the hunger, health, protection and displacement needs while putting in place urgent winterization activities. While the situation is complex, NGOs can respond to it but only if the needed funding is urgently and rapidly availed by donors.

2. Second, ensure funding is available to support sector-wide interventions that are responsive to gender, age and disability. Such funding must include targeted interventions that address the specific needs of women and girls.
Finally, standing in solidarity with all Afghan citizens, as is our collective objective today, requires securing the right enabling environment to ensure safe, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian workers and relief items. Gender balanced, diverse humanitarian teams are essential to the delivery of quality, culturally sensitive and principled aid that meets the needs of the most vulnerable Afghans in all their diversity.

Afghanistan is another test to the humanitarian community, but it is the job and purpose of all of us in this room, near and far, to rise to the challenge of supporting a country facing several, simultaneous crises. I urge that now is not the time for empty words and rhetoric, to stand in true solidarity with Afghans they need our concrete action now more than ever.

Thank you.