

HIGH-LEVEL PLEDGING EVENT FOR THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN YEMEN

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND - 26 FEBRUARY 2019

Concept Note

“Yemen is the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. More than 24 million people – three-quarters of the population – need some form of assistance and protection. Some 20 million people are food insecure. And 10 million of these people do not know how they will obtain their next meal...”

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

“A terrible tragedy is unfolding in Yemen. And it is getting worse. Millions of people are starving, sick and desperate. They have one message for the world: this war needs to stop.”

Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Background

Yemen is the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Years of conflict, economic decline and institutional collapse are driving major increases in needs across all sectors. More than 24 million people – including 3.3 million displaced people – require humanitarian aid and protection. In December 2018, results of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis confirmed that more than 20 million people – a staggering two-thirds of the population – are food insecure. This includes nearly a quarter of a million people who are facing catastrophic levels of hunger. At the same time, Yemen continues to grapple with a major outbreak of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea, worsening rates of malnutrition, serious protection concerns and other challenges.

The United Nations and partners are rushing to roll back this catastrophe. In 2018, despite ongoing conflict and serious access challenges in some locations, humanitarian agencies reached all 333 districts across the country with some kind of assistance. In December 2018, about 9.5 million people received emergency food assistance – a record achievement and nearly three times more people than two years ago. In 2019, relief efforts will expand even further. Partners will scale up to provide 12 million Yemenis with emergency food assistance every month – a 50 per cent increase over 2018 targets. Assistance across all sectors will reach 15 million people – about half the population. Given the scale, urgency and complexity of this crisis, the 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) will put forward large-scale, evidence-based programmes to save lives, strengthen protection and ensure that people who are suffering get the assistance they need.

Since October, the UN has sought action on five key steps to prevent famine in Yemen. One of these steps is to increase funding and support for humanitarian operations. Support for the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP), along with contributions to the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, is the most effective and efficient way to ensure a coordinated and principled humanitarian response. Unearmarked core support to UN agencies and humanitarian partners and to the Central Emergency Response Fund are also crucial to ensure predictable and timely funding to the crisis.

The Event

To support the humanitarian response in Yemen and alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people, the United Nations and the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland are convening a High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, in Geneva on 26 February 2019.

Information on Co-Hosts

Secretary-General of the United Nations, ***His Excellency Mr. António Guterres***

Vice-President of the Federal Council, Switzerland, ***Her Excellency Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga***

Minister for Foreign Affairs, ***Her Excellency Ms. Margot Wallström***

Objectives

- Raise awareness of the severe humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Advocate urgent action by the international community to address acute humanitarian needs.
- Mobilize urgent resources in support of the humanitarian response in Yemen, highlighting the inter-agency 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) as the most effective, efficient and strategic investment to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection to 15 million people across the country.
- Highlight the capacity and commitment of humanitarian partners to meet all targets in the 2019 YHRP.
- Promote respect for humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law and human rights and advocate protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel, safe and unimpeded access and accountability.
- Promote complementarity between immediate life-saving humanitarian action and efforts to bolster essential public institutions and improve access to livelihoods.
- Reinforce progress towards and continue to advocate a political solution for Yemen.

Participation and level of representation

The event will be convened from 10h00–17h00 in room XVIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. Registration is mandatory. All Member States are invited, as well as leaders of relevant regional organizations, development finance institutions, UN agencies, funds and programmes, and representatives from relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations.

Member States are asked to participate at ministerial level. The maximum size of delegation is four (head of delegation +3).

Member States are strongly encouraged to commit financial support to Yemen ahead of the event in view of the urgency of the situation. Any contributions and pledges made as of 1 January 2019 or announced as intended for 2019 will be counted towards the overall event announcement.

Agenda and format

Opening statements: will be presented by the co-hosts (the United Nations, Switzerland and Sweden).

Statements and announcements: Statements/announcement of pledges by participating delegates *should be limited to 3 minutes maximum*. The chairs will give the floor for Minister-level delegates followed by other participants. UN Agencies and NGOs will also make statements.

Panel Discussion on Challenges of Food Security and the Role of the Economy

Closing session: Closing remarks will be made by the Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock.

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