I am delighted to be here in Geneva to brief you on the Global Consultation for the World Humanitarian Summit.

Many thanks to the Government of Switzerland for your generosity in hosting this consultation, and for your substantive contributions to the World Humanitarian Summit process so far.

Humanitarian aid workers are risking their lives and their health around the world to support people in need. They are making an enormous difference, from South Sudan where famine was averted last year, to Syria, where a massive aid operation delivers food, clean water and healthcare for millions of people every month. But this is not enough. We cannot keep up with the growing scale of humanitarian needs and the ever-more complex landscape for humanitarian action.

The Secretary-General called the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit two years ago as a global response to this challenge, and as part of his post-2015 agenda for change.

The Global Consultation that starts tomorrow is the culmination of a process that has involved more than 23,000 people in 151 countries. The Summit will bring together Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, local communities and other partners to seek bold and transformative ways of meeting the needs of the millions of people affected by crisis.

The World Humanitarian Summit has two clear goals.

First, it should re-inspire and re-invigorate our global commitment to the principle of humanity, and to upholding the dignity and safety of the millions of women, men and children who are caught up in crises.

Second, it will be a point of departure for world leaders and stakeholders to agree to make commitments and take action to address major affronts to humanity.

The Synthesis Report that has emerged from the consultations so far is based on five areas for action.
First, Dignity: The strongest call that we heard was to empower affected people to cope and recover with dignity and to put people at the heart of humanitarian action.

In concrete terms, this means supporting communities to decide on their own priorities, whether that might be the immediate provision of shelter, repairing infrastructure, or investing in emergency education or healthcare until a crisis passes. It means improving two-way communication with civil society, and empowering women and girls to speak up and to lead. It means including everyone, from young people to the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Second, Safety: The consultations have emphasized the centrality of protecting people from harm. In the past two weeks alone, attacks on a hospital in Afghanistan and a wedding party in Yemen have killed scores of civilians. But these are just two outrageous examples of a global crisis of protection and accountability, in which parties to conflict all over the world routinely flout international humanitarian and human rights law. The consultations have called clearly for more robust mechanisms to prevent and investigate attacks and for increased political action to prevent and end conflicts.

Third, Resilience: People want more investment in resilience so that families and communities can weather shocks and continue to flourish despite a harsh climate or recurrent natural disasters, or even in conflict. We need to work with development partners to address vulnerability and risks both before and after disasters occur.

This means supporting people to continue with their livelihoods and retain their independence. It means investing in programmes like one in Chad that helps women to become farmers and generate an income to feed their families, instead of relying on humanitarian aid. It also means joint programmes with partners working on disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate change mitigation.

Fourth, Partnerships: We have already made progress on expanding the humanitarian system beyond traditional donors and organizations. But we must do more and be even more diverse and inclusive if we are going to meet growing humanitarian needs in the years and decades to come. The consultations called in particular for greater support to local first responders.

Finally and fifthly, Finance: We are all aware that the humanitarian system is facing serious financial constraints. While donors give ever more generously, the gap between humanitarian needs and the resources to meet them is widening. We need to explore ways for more resources to be provided more reliably and more predictably. The Synthesis report provides some recommendations on diversifying the funding base, and on innovative financing mechanisms. It also emphasizes the need for greater efficiencies and transparency in humanitarian spending. The Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, which will report before the end of the year, will have a key role here.

Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen,

This Global Consultation will be an opportunity for Member States and other stakeholders to reflect on the worldwide consultations, to deliberate on the proposals, to consider new initiatives and to rally around the call to put people at the heart of humanitarian action.

It also provides a chance for us to take a collective look at the proposals in the Synthesis Report and offer strong support for the need to change.

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.
A high level summit is critical to reaffirm our collective responsibility humanity and show our commitment to end suffering around the world.

I count on your experience and expertise, and urge your full participation to complete the consultation process and kick-start a new phase towards the Summit itself.

Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the next two months, we will continue to develop the proposals from the Synthesis Report, which have given us the basis for our humanitarian toolbox going forward.

And of course we must continue to rally around bold initiatives and carry them forward to Istanbul.

The second focus will be guided by the Secretary-General’s report, which will be released early next year. The report will convey the Secretary-General’s vision for the Summit and beyond, and the actions and commitments needed to deliver on this vision.

The report will reflect the strong calls for change that emerged from the consultative process. It will be informed by key post-2015 process and reviews, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the discussions around Climate Change as well as on women, peace and security, and the peacebuilding and peace keeping operations reviews.

The report will speak to the actions and commitments needed from Member States and other stakeholders, in order to confront the humanitarian implications of some of the defining challenges of our time.

I would like to express my personal gratitude for the work and commitment of Dr Jemilah Mahmood as the Chief of the World Humanitarian Summit secretariat. As you all know, she has decided to step down to take up an exciting new position as an Under-Secretary-General of the IFRC. I wish her all the best in her new position, and I hope you will join me in recognizing and thanking her for her contribution.

I also promised that there will be no gap in leadership. We have worked extremely swiftly yet transparently to run a competitive process. Mr Antoine Gerard has been appointed, after a very transparent process. He has a wealth of experience and a track record of leadership that will enable him to make the Summit a success. He has held leadership positions both in headquarters and the field, and prior to that has also held positions of leadership in the private sector. Congratulations to Mr Gerard.

So again, thank you all very much for your participation to date and for your energetic contributions to the process to date.

I count on your continued support and engagement through the Global Consultation and beyond, all the way to Istanbul, which will lead us to the point of departure from Istanbul, which will allow us to deliver better on the humanity that we all want for men and women.

Thank you.

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