

Under Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien
Remarks at the Global Humanitarian Overview 2016 Status Report
'Investing in Humanity: Meeting the needs of vulnerable people in 2016
Side event, ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

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As delivered

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

Today I have the honour of presenting the Global Humanitarian Overview Status Report for 2016.

Casting our mind back, in December 2015 I outlined priority needs across 37 countries for this year, where humanitarian suffering had already reached levels not seen since the Second World War.

Since then needs have soared even higher, with 130 million people in 40 countries now needing assistance just to survive. The UN-coordinated inter-agency humanitarian appeal is calling for \$21.6 billion to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable 95.4 million people among them. In other words, since the beginning of the year another 5.5 million people's lives have been torn apart, their survival and safety thrown into jeopardy.

This spike largely comes down to two sudden onset disasters - the cyclone in Fiji and the earthquake in Ecuador; and the devastating repercussions of the formidable El Niño phenomenon, which has led to devastating droughts in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. These countries need support to the tune of \$1.5 billion and \$359 million respectively. New appeals have also been issued for Burundi and Haiti since I announced the year's Global Humanitarian Overview in December.

The generosity of our donors is not in dispute. Each year they give more. The 2016 appeals have received \$5.5 billion in funding so far – the highest amount ever received at mid-year.

Nonetheless, we are facing a funding gap of \$16.1 billion, due to the unrelenting exponential growth of humanitarian need. The grim truth is: this appeal is just one quarter funded.

Demographic growth, protracted conflicts that know no resolution and an increase in the intensity of natural disasters linked to climate change - all of these factors will inevitably continue to drive up needs.

The Syrian conflict, now in its sixth year, is the world's worst humanitarian crisis, as civilians continue to bear the brunt of the horrific violence, which has forced 13.5 million people to need assistance; and has displaced 11.2 million of them.

This year's appeal calls for help for many crises that are not in the international spotlight. Crises such as the Lake Chad Basin, an area spanning Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, in which in that region half the population is displaced, food insecure, or requires protection. This is the fastest growing displacement crisis in Africa, yet it is one of the most underfunded emergencies, having received just 20 percent of the \$527 million it requires this year.

Nearby, in the Central African Republic, as the country moves towards stability having held democratic elections, humanitarian suffering still looms large with half of the population expected to suffer from extreme or severe acute malnutrition this year. The CAR appeal is just 14 per cent funded.

In Myanmar, one million people need food, health, protection and livelihoods support: the appeal is just over one quarter funded.

Don't get me wrong. We have supported millions of people around the world with life-saving aid each month of this year. To give some examples: collectively we have enrolled 694,000 displaced children in school in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey; we have cleared 25 million square meters of land in South Sudan from mines and explosive remnants; we vaccinated 4.7 million children against polio in Yemen, and delivered cross-line assistance to 820,000 people in Syria.

At the World Humanitarian Summit leaders demonstrated overwhelming support for the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity, which puts vulnerable people at the heart of our collective decision-making and action.

Now is the time for this action. The persistent gap in funding which stalls and restricts our collective response to suffering the world over, does not need to be inevitable.

One of the most practical commitments you can make here today is to come in behind this appeal to demonstrate solidarity with each of the 95.4 million people it targets in 2016.

We need \$16.1 billion. We have six months.

This appeal will support millions of mothers to feed their malnourished children. It will help doctors give lifesaving care to children injured by bombing. It will help pastoralists

keep their cattle alive. And it will help protect women and girls from sexual abuse and violence.

And this time there are new dimensions. At the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul we agreed to adopt a ‘new way of working’ by collaborating to reduce vulnerability over the long term. To support this change we need to not only make existing funds go further but also to leverage new resources. Humanitarian organizations are committed to bringing relief to people in critical need but they cannot do it alone: they need predictable, flexible and adequate funding.

Reducing needs requires new kinds of partnerships and I am pleased to report that collaboration between humanitarian actors, governments of crisis-affected countries, donors from the public and private sector, are stronger than ever.

Eighteen States and 19 aid organizations have committed to the Grand Bargain launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, which aims to create a more efficient, transparent, accountable and effective humanitarian system. The number of signatories is growing. We are the stronger for working together.

Moving forward, we have the opportunity to realize the vision of the World Humanitarian Summit by helping every child, woman and man, from Chad to Yemen, from Vanuatu to Guatemala, with the life-saving assistance that they deserve. We must start here, today, by fully funding the humanitarian response in 2016.

I echo the words of the Secretary-General: “The Summit is a point of departure to act, but there must also be a destination – a point where our action will have helped to transform the lives of millions of people around the world.”

And on a practical note, the data for this overview is found in the OCHA-managed Financial Tracking Service. To be accurate, this data relies on you regularly reporting to it. If you have any questions as to whether or how to do so, or about the many ways in which you can make financial or in-kind contributions towards this appeal, please turn to the last pages of the Status Report you have in front of you.

Finally, I am pleased that today we are also presenting the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2016 by Development Initiatives. This report complements the GHO by analyzing humanitarian funding in 2015, with a focus on humanitarian financing data both within and outside the UN-coordinated Humanitarian Response Plans, Flash Appeals and Regional Refugee and Migration Response Plans.

I thank you for gathering here today and above all to show your willingness to support our collaborative efforts to help all acutely vulnerable children, women and men the world over. They are looking to us – we must not let them down.

Thank you.