

Under Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator

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Opening remarks at the 2017 Global Humanitarian Policy Forum: “The future is here: the scale of change required to the humanitarian sector to contribute toward the 2030 Agenda for people in crisis.”

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As delivered

Deputy Secretary-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 2017 Global Humanitarian Policy Forum.

The purpose of the forum is to generate good new ideas on how to better assist those caught in crises.

Every day, those who work in humanitarian response are confronted with extreme misery and complex problems to tackle.

Therefore, it is good to remind ourselves that progress is possible.

Between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell from 1.9 billion to 836 million.

The child mortality rate fell by more than half over the same period.

However, while it is important to believe that progress is possible, the truth is, the scale of problems in crises is devastating and huge.

Today we are putting online OCHA’s 2017 World Humanitarian Data and Trends Report, one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of humanitarian trends. One of the things it shows is that over the past decade, the number of conflicts rose from 278 in 2006 to 402 in 2016.

Combined with the impact of natural hazards, this has reversed years of progress on global hunger, with the number of under-nourished people reaching 815 million in 2016. Conflict, economic shocks, climate change and the failure of political systems to address them, have led to the number of people who rely on humanitarian assistance over the past decade, to triple.

Despite these challenges, I believe there is room for hope.

Eighteen months since we gathered at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, much has been achieved, as outlined in this fantastic first annual progress report that I am pleased to launch today. Today you have just received the summary but I encourage you to read the full report.

First, I would like to thank the 142 Member States, companies and humanitarian and development organizations that reported on their progress, which enables us to see what is happening as commitments are implemented, and to contribute to holding each other to account.

Over the past 18 months, we have started to promote better join-up between humanitarian and development activities. As the Deputy-Secretary-General said, crises will not be solved by humanitarian interventions, but through political and development solutions.

One of the areas I am most excited about is the new arrangement of the Steering Committee put in place by the Deputy-Secretary-General. We are already starting to see good practice emerging from countries ranging from Somalia to Mauritania, and development institutions are engaging in new ways, led by the World Bank but others are also investing more in crises.

The Grand Bargain has mobilized more than 50 donors and aid agencies to improve the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of aid and financing. We have upgraded to OCHA's Financial Tracking System (FTS) and linked to international transparency standards (IATI) and are beginning to get better reporting and tracing of funding flows.

I welcome that donors are also scaling up multi-year financing and cash transfer programming.

On Friday, we began to fund the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). I was encouraged that it not only received a record amount in 2017, crossing the US\$500 million mark for the first time, but also that many donors committed over multiple years. The best financing is fast and long-term.

Another example of progress is the greater access that local organizations now have to international system finance. Last year, national NGOs received \$171 million through OCHA-managed Country-Based Pooled Funds, the majority through direct grants. This very nearly meets the Grand Bargain target of 25 per cent of aid being provided to local responders.

Other organizations are also taking steps to drive forward their commitments to support a response that is "as local as possible, as international as necessary." For example, online learning tools are helping local partners strengthen their financial and human resource systems. Building the capacity of local organizations is critical as it can give financiers more confidence to invest directly.

Member States are also investing more in education, health-care, and livelihood programmes for refugees and host countries, most notably through the new \$2 billion international development association sub-window for refugees and host communities. Another good example is how International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank are playing a positive role in helping direct more investment to fragile situations, to increase resilience and address root causes of vulnerability.

Greater use of insurance-based financing is one of the trends we are observing. In the last five years, the African Risk Capacity, a new initiative for African countries to insure themselves against adverse weather events reducing harvests, has paid out \$35 million, helping more than 2 million people affected by drought in Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, and Malawi.

Through a similar facility, in September, Dominica received an insurance pay-out of \$19 million just two weeks after it was hit by Hurricane Maria. The speed of this pay-out was powerful, and demonstrates how these kinds of mechanisms can contribute.

This is a decent score card for just a short time period. But we need to see more progress in other areas.

We urgently need durable solutions for the more than 40 million people who are internally displaced by conflict and violence, and we need greater efforts by Governments and partners to reduce internal displacement by half by 2030.

This means adopting new approaches to internal displacement and working towards collective outcomes which reduce needs, reduce risks and reduce vulnerabilities of IDPs and host communities over time. It also means applying the right mix of humanitarian and development financing at the right time, to help achieve durable solutions.

We need robust action from global leaders to strengthen the protection of civilians in conflict and to stop the atrocious, violations of international humanitarian law in today's war zones.

We must find better ways to reduce the scourge of gender-based violence in conflicts, and we have to do a better job of holding perpetrators to account.

And we must also all work to eradicate all incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers, and implement a zero-tolerance policy across all humanitarian response.

Finally, and most importantly we have to put affected people right at the heart of all our efforts. This is the test we must always apply.

Together, we can lift people out of crisis, but only by redoubling our efforts to deliver on the commitments we have made. The global humanitarian response system reaches millions of people every year, but there is ample room for improvement. The more

positive ideas we can generate today can improve our response and benefit people in need.

Thank you.