Key Messages
World Humanitarian Summit Preparations
November 2013

- The Secretary-General has announced that the first World Humanitarian Summit will be held in early 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey.

- The purpose of the summit is to set a forward-looking agenda for humanitarian action to collectively address future humanitarian challenges. The aim is to build a more inclusive and diverse humanitarian system committed to humanitarian principles. Consultative meetings will be an opportunity to bring all key stakeholders together, share best practices and seek innovative ways to make humanitarian action more effective.

- Four broad themes will be discussed in the consultations leading up to the summit and at the summit itself: humanitarian effectiveness; reducing vulnerability and managing risk; transformation through innovation; and serving the needs of people in conflict. Building a more inclusive and diverse global humanitarian system with a strong commitment to humanitarian principles is at the heart of this initiative.

- Extensive consultations at field and HQ levels with a wide range of partners will be necessary to identify recommendations and develop a programme for the future of humanitarian action. We will need our partners’ participation for this to succeed.

- Starting in 2014, through regional meetings, technical consultations and online tools, input will be sought from a diverse group of people and organisations, aimed at improving humanitarian action. They include affected communities, civil society organisations, governments, regional organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, technical experts and the private sector. This will be a unique opportunity to capture the views of current and new partners. The consultation process will be as important as the summit itself.

- The Secretary-General has asked OCHA and the Under-Secretary-General to coordinate the preparations for the summit and to facilitate a series of regional consultations during 2014 and 2015. A dedicated WHS secretariat is being established to support this work. The summit is one of OCHA’s top priorities for the next few years.

- OCHA will ensure that preparations and consultations for the summit are linked to the post-2015 development agenda and the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework. We will ensure that they capitalize on ongoing discussions in the UN system and humanitarian community, such as the climate change talks and the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Conference in 2015, as well as other strategic initiatives at the national, regional and global levels.

- Active involvement from people interested in improving humanitarian action will be critical to making the consultations and summit a success and ensure broad-based participation. This can happen through supporting the WHS secretariat (for example, with secondments or resources); partnering with governments to co-host regional consultation meetings; ensuring active participation in regional and technical meetings and identifying national and regional experts; raising partners’ awareness of the summit, contributing expert time and inputs to task teams; advising the WHS secretariat of key national and regional events to capitalize on; and contributing to the web platform and moderated discussions.

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