THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN YEMEN CONFERENCE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Doha February 22 – 24, 2016

Closing Statement

During February 22 – 24, 2016, The Yemen Humanitarian Crisis Conference was held in Doha, Qatar. The event was hosted by Qatar Charity and organized by; High Relief Committee in Yemen (Yemen), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), The Arab League, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (Saudi Arabia), International Committee of the Red Cross (Switzerland), Qatar Charity (Qatar), International Humanitarian City (United Arab Emirates), International Medical Corps (UK), International Islamic Charity Organization (Kuwait), IHH (Turkey), SATART NETWOR (UK), and International Council of Voluntary Agencies (Switzerland).

The Conference drew nearly 150 participants from 90 governmental and non-governmental organizations at local, regional and international levels. It was also the first event of its kind since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen and came as an outcome of joint and collaborative work undertaken by the aforementioned parties.

The organizers saw the urgency for drawing attention to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, especially because the conflict has prolonged for nearly six years, and the humanitarian needs this conflict has generated drastically outweighs the very limited resources available for responding to it. For instance, the number of people in need for help with basic goods and services exceed 21 million, in a country where the overall population does not exceed 26 million and where health, education water and sanitation systems, among others, are rapidly falling apart.

During the first two days of the event, eight technical workshops were conducted covering six sectors (namely; Health, Water & Sanitation, Food & Nutrition, Livelihoods, Education and Coordination & Protection). Led by experts and technical specialists, these workshops focused on diagnosing the state of each sector in Yemen, resources required for proper interventions, challenges that humanitarian actors face in responding to those needs. They also analyzed and discussed requirements for enhancing coordination and cooperation for a more effective response.

The workshops utilized the following existing response plans as frames of reference:

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The Humanitarian Response plan for 2016 (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs)
The Humanitarian Response plan for 2016 (Yemen High Relief Committee)
The Humanitarian Response plan for 2016 (King Salman for Relief and Humanitarian Aid Center).
Multi-Sector Field Survey Evaluation (Qatar Charity).

In spirit of reinforcing principles of partnership and cooperation, a primary goal of the conference in itself to enhance humanitarian response in Yemen, the second day of the event witnessed the launch of a number of key initiatives announced by various participating organizations.

During the third, and last, day the following figures delivered speeches:

- Mr. Yusof bin Ahmed Al Kuwairi, QC’s CEO
- His Excellency Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Meraikhi, Director of International Development Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- His Excellency Dr. Abdul Raqeeb Fatah, Head of the Yemen High Relief Committee
- His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Al Matouq, The Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary General
- Mr. Rashid Khalikov, Assistant Secretary General for Partnership in the Middle East and Central Asia.
- Mr. Abdullah Al Rwailly, Directory of International Aid Management, King Salman for Relief and Humanitarian Aid Center.
- Mr. Reza Kasrai, Regional Representative, International Council of Voluntary Agencies ICVA.

Afterwards, drawn from the sector-specific workshops of the first two days, the key recommendations of the conference were presented as follows:

**For Coordination, the conference called for:**

- The involvement of the different regional governmental organizations (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League, and the Gulf Cooperation Council) in the Coordination and information sharing mechanisms.
- Reinforcement of the participation of non-governmental organizations from the Gulf in the special coordination mechanism for Yemen and commended the role of King Salman Center for Humanitarian Aid and Relief in reinforcing such participation.
- The enhancement of the available coordination mechanisms to avoid repetition, and to ensure that joint work would lead to a more effective and efficient response.
- Full utilization of existing information, expertise and plans through applying and supporting the United Nations’ coordination mechanism.
Making every effort to utilizing and conducting needs assessments, such as the multi-sector rapid needs assessment prepared by Qatar Charity.

The clarification of donor expectations from the Gulf region with regard to coordination mechanism before granting any funds.

Capacity building for Yemeni humanitarian organizations concerning the system and mechanisms of humanitarian works.

**Protection:**

- Honoring humanitarian principles and the minimum standards of humanitarian work in all different fields.
- Applying ‘Do No Harm’ principle while delivering humanitarian services for the protection of beneficiaries and humanitarian workers.
- Raising awareness about International Humanitarian Law and following its regulations.
- Raising the awareness among Yemeni humanitarian organizations on requirements and necessary conditions for protecting beneficiaries and the humanitarian workers.

**Health:**

- Need to focus on primary health and well as mother and children’s health.
- Supporting preventive healthcare through prioritizing vaccination programs.
- Finding creative solutions that suit the nature of the current challenges; one of the solutions could be having mobile clinics.
- Rebuilding the health system in viable areas.
- Prioritizing healthcare management in emergencies, primarily, through developing proper human resources.

**Education:**

- Prioritizing the education sector to save the coming the generations; especially that the crisis has been going for long.
- Reconstructing the educational system in the areas where the required objective conditions are available.
- Ultimate employment of human resources of public educational institutions to help resume the operation of the education system.
- Inventing creative educational solutions that suit the nature of the crisis; for example, using tents as temporary schools.
Mobilizing the local community to effectively participating in developing and sustaining the education sector.

Water and Sanitation:
- Mobilizing the local community to actively participating in developing the water and sanitation sector and ensuring its sustainability.
- Fixing damaged water resources, as soon as possible, to resume operation at their highest possible capacities.
- Resuming the operating the sanitation system to protect the environment and prevent diseases.
- Utilization of alternate power sources to resume operation of water pumps.

Food and Nutrition:
- Providing food items to those in need, especially in areas that are hard to reach.
- Offering cash support to resource poor families to cover, at least, some of their food supply costs.
- Supporting families to become self-sufficient through subsistence farming to secure their food requirements.
- Strengthening health centers with existing programs fighting malnutrition.

Shelter & Non-food items (NFIs):
- Mobilizing the local community to effectively participating in the efforts exerted to provide dignified housing for needy families.
- Seeking assistance from local administrations to help fix shelter problems.
- Encouraging the use of technologies that help build cost-effective, time-efficient and high quality housing facilities.
- Helping needy families to rebuild or renovate their damaged houses.
- Help make necessary nonfood items available for families in need for that kind of help.

Livelihoods:
- Supporting small-scale projects that can potentially enhance food security and help generate income for those involved, such as fishing, farming and livestock & poultry raising.

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Providing small loans for context-specific projects in a manner that is financially sustainable.

Reviving the production cycle and encouraging economic empowerment wherever possible.

Utilizing normative practices of the Yemeni economy to help reinvigorate the production cycle and resource distribution.

As follows, several participating organizations announced significant initiatives to further help reinforce humanitarian response efforts in Yemen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Initiators</th>
<th>Fields\ Sectors</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Total Value $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qatar Charity</td>
<td>Multi-fields</td>
<td>Multi-partners</td>
<td>100,000,000 over 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Islamic Charity Organization</td>
<td>Multi Sectors</td>
<td>Multi-partners</td>
<td>100,000,000 over 3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar Red Crescent</td>
<td>Multi Sectors</td>
<td>Qatar Charity</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
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<td>Silatech</td>
<td>Economic Empowerment</td>
<td>Qatar Charity</td>
<td>5,000,000 over 3 years</td>
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<td>Reach Out to Asia</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Qatar Charity</td>
<td>2,000,000 over 3 years</td>
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<td>Human Appeal</td>
<td>Education\ economic empowerment</td>
<td>Qatar Charity</td>
<td>5,000,000 over 3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamic Dawa Organization</td>
<td>Multi-sectors</td>
<td>Qatar Charity</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
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<td>King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center</td>
<td>Coordination mechanism reinforcement</td>
<td>Multi-partners</td>
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<td>The Arab League</td>
<td>Raising awareness about the International humanitarian law</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Capacity reinforcement of Yemeni humanitarian organizations</td>
<td>Multi-partners</td>
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<td>TIK (Turkey)</td>
<td>Multi-sectors</td>
<td>Multi-partners</td>
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<td>Turkish Red Crescent</td>
<td>Multi-sectors</td>
<td>Multi-partners</td>
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In respect to the principles of responsibility and cooperation during the humanitarian response to crises:

- The participants emphasized the importance of cooperating with specialized Yemeni governmental offices and the activation and empowering the local Yemeni civic organizations. Such organizations would effectively contribute to delivering humanitarian aid.
- They emphasized the necessity of having various coordination mechanisms complement each other so that the overall humanitarian response in Yemen will be more effective and efficient. As such, all actors need to work under the framework of International Coordination alongside the Yemeni government. They also reiterated that, in this spirit and under this shared goal, the role of all actors and initiatives that contribute to improving the humanitarian response in Yemen must be highly appreciated.

At the end, the participants thanked the initiators for organizing this conference; they also thanked Qatar Charity for hosting the events and for being very hospitable.

Doha, February 24, 2016