Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien

Statement to the Announcement Plenary
World Humanitarian Summit
24 May 2016

[Thanks to the Host and Amb. Ulusoy]

All protocol observed: On behalf of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), I am proud to commit our support for the Secretary-General in advancing the implementation of the Agenda for Humanity as outlined in his report for the World Humanitarian Summit: One Humanity: Shared Responsibility. The true test will be turning the Agenda for Humanity and the 32 core commitments into meaningful change for the more than 130 million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance and protection. We align ourselves fully to the core commitments.

In everything we do, respect for international humanitarian and human rights law is paramount. The guarantee of protection for all civilians living in armed conflict is a shared imperative. OCHA has always and will continue to condemn all grave violations. When civilians are attacked, when medical personnel and facilities are targeted, we will condemn those responsible in the strongest terms.

We will fully support a global campaign that demands strengthened compliance with international humanitarian law.
OCHA commits to adopt the new way of working outlined by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Humanity. While we recognize that every crisis has its own unique characteristics we will work with all partners to ensure that humanitarian needs are met and that, at the same time, risk and vulnerability are reduced over the long term. OCHA commits to seek opportunities where multi-year humanitarian planning adds value and leads to sustainable development.

We commit to ensure that this new way of working will never pose risks for our humanitarian principles, which underpin everything we do. We will ensure humanitarian principles guide all our actions as we support our partners to help communities be better prepared for and more resilient to shocks.

We need to stop being in a reactive mode to each new disaster, scrambling for resources when crises occur, increasing the risk of late and fragmented responses. There is ample evidence that preparedness is a no-regret, cost-effective investment. OCHA therefore is committed to work through the Global Preparedness Partnership to help countries reach a minimum level of readiness to future disaster and climate-related risks.

Leaving no-one behind means we ensure that the needs and rights of women, girls, men and boys are equally reflected and effectively addressed in all aspects of our work. Recognizing that humanitarian crises often disproportionately impact women, children and the disabled, we will redouble our efforts to ensure their needs and leadership guides humanitarian response. OCHA commits to make mandatory the use of sex and age disaggregated data in all our reports.
We also commit to promote the availability of open, shared risk analysis. Accordingly, OCHA will establish a humanitarian data centre in the Netherlands which will help to improve the data capacity of humanitarians across the globe.

In order to improve the lives of millions of crisis-affected people and place decision-making in their hands, OCHA will work to better integrate cash-programming into our coordination systems and advocate for greater use of cash based responses, wherever feasible. We also commit to increase the overall portion of humanitarian appeal funding channeled through UN country-based pooled funds to 15 per cent and to expand the CERF to one billion dollars annually by 2018.

We proudly commit to support the Disability Charter, the Urban Charter and the Connecting Business Initiative. These are motivating, action oriented examples of the types of new initiatives being launched here that aim to make humanitarian action more inclusive.

Lastly, OCHA commits to put the people we serve at the centre of all we do. We commit to a common service approach to ensure community engagement is integral in all humanitarian operations. We will also incorporate the Core Humanitarian Standard in all training for OCHA staff.

With this clear and action-driven agenda, I am confident that we are embarking on the right road for a renewing of our compact with people in need everywhere. Let us match these commitments to a new way of working that we make today with our trusted, timeless humanitarian principles.
Above all, let us do better, embrace change, and work together for people who need us.

Thank you.