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As delivered

Thank you very much.

It's a pleasure to be here. I would like to thank ALNAP for all the efforts that they have done in order to prepare for this meeting. I know the kind of effort that is necessary for meetings of that nature. I have done a number of them throughout the years. I would also like to thank our other partners, particularly USAID for all their efforts to prepare for this Forum.

Let me start by saying that this is really a very important meeting as it marks, in my view, the beginning of the second phase for the preparation for the World Humanitarian Summit. We have had a large number of consultation meetings at a regional level and a number of thematic discussions, and we have discussed all kinds of issues.

We have been more successful in analysing the situation and knowing what the problems are, defining the challenges and perhaps making a number of recommendations as to how we should proceed. However, we have done the easy part. Now, we are entering with you into the difficult part, namely, finding the solutions to the problems facing the international humanitarian system and humanitarian action that we have identified.

In the few minutes that I have, I'd like to outline what I believe are the ten main challenges that are currently facing humanitarian action. These are the challenges that, we hope, that these two days will come up with solutions for in order for us to address these challenges in a more effective manner.

The first challenge in my view is the question of the reform of the humanitarian architecture. We have been failing in the peaceful settlement of disputes. All the old conflicts remain with us and new ones are erupting every day. We have been failing in early warning, with all kinds of difficulties facing us, surprising us, day in and day out, with very little time to prepare and adequately respond. Whether it's the fall of Mosul, the fall of Sana'a, the fall of Ramadi and the list is long. We have also failed in translating early warning- when we had early warning- to early action. As a result, suffering has increased and the complexity of humanitarian problems has increased, and humanitarian action has become much more dangerous, much more complicated and much more difficult and this should not be the case. We are dealing with the system as if it can cope and I personally think that it cannot. We need to examine how the system can be reformed.

The second issue is access and protection. Protection has to be at the heart of humanitarian action and we have to ensure that parties to conflicts are held accountable to violation of International Humanitarian Law. We have not been successful in achieving this objective as well. We have some ideas, but these ideas are not enough.

The third point is how to deal with the relation between humanitarian assistance and counter terrorism. We all recognise the crucial importance of counter terrorism but we have to examine how to mitigate the negative impact of laws and other related measures that we need to defend ourselves against terrorism on humanitarian action.

The fourth is finance. In 2004, the assessment of needs was around three billion dollars. In 2015, this became 18.8 billion dollars. A 627% increase. Of course, the funds have increased. However, the gap between the needs and the funds received has also dramatically increased. We also have to examine how to benefit from different societal values, religious, associated with norms and traditions, or otherwise. We also have to see how we can benefit from the experience of the private sector and other innovative and practical ideas like longer term funding, flexible and timely funding in order to address some of these financial problems.

The fifth point is burden sharing. We need to address this issue from a different perspective. We have countries that may face crises not because of a problem of their own, but because they accepted the responsibility of hosting refugees. This is the case in Lebanon in particular, in Jordan, in Chad and in several other places around the world.

The sixth point is de-politicisation of humanitarian action. Since almost 80% of humanitarian action is related to political crises, this has resulted in the politicisation that we are suffering from and we have to be much more forceful in addressing this issue to ensure that politics does not intervene in humanitarian action.

The seventh point is related to the localisation of humanitarian response. This is something that we all agree on. We all agree on the necessity of localisation of humanitarian response. Yet the steps that are taken are hesitant, slow and ineffective and we need to find a much more effective way in order to achieve this objective.

The eighth point is listening to beneficiaries and in particular to vulnerable groups: women, children, the elderly, and disabled. We have been doing a very poor job as far as these segments of our societies are concerned.

The ninth point is regarding the humanitarian action and development nexus. We have been trying to advance this agenda in the context of the resilience discussions, and there are efforts that have been done but we have not achieved coherence as of yet, and this is another difficult challenge.

The tenth and final point is how to increase effectiveness of humanitarian action. There are many lessons to be learned from the private sector and by using innovative technology. Many lessons to be learned from different experiences that we have had throughout the years, and the adoption of a culture of striving for constant improvement in humanitarian action.

I am confident that with the wisdom and the experience of those who are within this hall we can achieve our objective. It is not an easy task, I know. However, I trust that with the great brainpower and the experience in this room we can achieve what we are tasked to achieve in the coming days.

Thank you.