



WORLD
HUMANITARIAN
SUMMIT

Regional Consultation for the Middle East and North Africa

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Photo: UNHCR/Dalia Khamissy

FINAL REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The World Humanitarian Summit Regional Steering Group for the Middle East and North Africa would like to thank all individuals, organizations and governments that participated in the regional consultation meeting in Jordan and in the extensive stakeholder consultations leading up to it for their contributions toward a more inclusive and effective approach to humanitarian action.



BACKGROUND TO THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT AND THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR MENA

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), to be held in Istanbul in May 2016, is an initiative of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It will bring together governments, humanitarian organizations, people affected by humanitarian crises and associated partners, including the private sector, to propose solutions to the most pressing challenges and set a forward-looking agenda to make humanitarian action fit for the future. It will be the first-ever humanitarian gathering of such a size and scope.

The preparatory process for the summit has been built on five levels of consultation:

- Eight regional consultations between June 2014 and July 2015;
- Thematic consultations, with expert working groups preparing thematic reports, and a final thematic consultation in Berlin in September 2015;
- One global consultation in Geneva in October 2015;
- Online consultations; and
- Linkages to related global processes on disaster risk reduction, climate change and the post-2015 development agenda.

The WHS regional consultation for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was held at the Dead Sea in Jordan from 3-5 March 2015. It was hosted by the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and co-chaired by the League of Arab States (LAS), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In the spirit of the summit's multi-stakeholder approach, the meeting brought together 180 participants from 17 countries representing Member States of the United Nations, regional organizations, civil society, affected communities, national and international non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the private sector, academia and religious leaders, as well as observers from five countries that have supported, hosted or committed to hosting WHS consultations.¹

The primary goals of the regional consultation were to a) inform the global WHS agenda and outcomes by providing strong regional recommendations that can shape the future of humanitarian action, based on findings from the preparatory stakeholder consultations and the discussions at the Dead Sea and b) to develop regionally specific recommendations that can be taken forward and implemented in the lead up to the summit.

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa regional consultation



WHS CONSULTATIONS

- (1) West and Central Africa, Cote d'Ivoire - June 2014
- (2) North and South-East Asia, Japan - July 2014
- (3) Eastern and Southern Africa, South Africa - October 2014
- (4) Europe and Others, Hungary - February 2015
- (5) Middle East and North Africa, Jordan - March 2015**
- (6) Latin America and the Caribbean, Guatemala - May 2015
- (7) Pacific Region, New Zealand - June 2015
- (8) South and Central Asia, Tajikistan - July 2015
- (9) Thematic Consultation, Germany - September 2015
- (10) Global Consultation, Switzerland - October 2015

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

¹ Germany, Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Turkey

HIGH-LEVEL OPENING REMARKS



Ms. Alia Al-Dalli, the Master of the Ceremonies, welcomed participants to the WHS regional consultation for the Middle East and North Africa. She underscored that the WHS process comes at a time where millions of men, women, elderly and children around the region suffer tremendously due to displacement, destruction and limited opportunities to lead a normal life. She highlighted that the meeting at the Dead Sea represented a unique opportunity to bring together different humanitarian stakeholders from the region, including affected communities, governments, religious leaders, private sector and academia. Stressing that everyone participating in the event has something to contribute, Ms. Al-Dalli encouraged open and honest discussions among participants on ways to improve humanitarian action and make it a better fit for the future. She concluded by welcoming the high-level speakers.



His Excellency Nasser Judeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, officially opened the regional consultation meeting. He noted how the MENA region is suffering from deteriorating humanitarian crises, political instability, violent conflicts and increasing risks of extremism and terrorism, all of which have negatively impacted development gains in the region.

Mr. Judeh gave special mention to the Palestine and Syria conflicts, calling the latter one of the most complex in recent history due to its prolonged violence and destruction and the targeting of civilians. He advocated for a rapid and just political solution to both of these conflicts, which he said requires a firm and coordinated response from the international community.

He called the Syrian refugee crisis an enormous global and regional economic challenge, with a few countries, such as Jordan, shouldering the burden. Yet, despite limited resources and strained services and infrastructure, Mr. Judeh highlighted how the Government of Jordan is committed to providing support through the Jordan Response Plan 2015, which amounts to US\$3 billion. Whilst recognizing the initial international will to support the Government of Jordan in the implementation of the projects set out in the plan, he lamented how most promises of support had not been fulfilled. He called upon the international community to urgently respond to Jordan's appeal.

Mr. Judeh paid tribute to the State of Kuwait for hosting the third pledging conference for Syria. He called on the United Nations to do more in Syria to help reach a political solution, put an end to the violence, ensure the integrity of the Syrian state and provide a solution for those Syrian refugees that are seeking to return home. He also called for greater financial support to UNHCR and UNRWA to continue providing assistance and protection to affected people.

Mr. Judeh concluded by stating that the Israel-Palestine conflict is at the root of many crises in the region. He thus reiterated the importance of establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian state and finding a permanent solution for Palestine refugees.



His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Badr Eddine Allali, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of Social Affairs Sector of the League of Arab States, identified the WHS as an unprecedented opportunity, bringing together for the first time representatives of governments, non-governmental organizations, affected communities, youth, academia, the private sector, UN agencies and other relevant stakeholders to shape the future of humanitarian action. He stressed the importance of putting affected communities at the heart of the summit process.

He called on the participants to use the regional consultation for MENA as an opportunity to find ways to better assist and protect millions of people across the region. He also emphasized the need to create practical solutions, on technical level, that may loosen the interference between political and security measures and humanitarian work.

Ambassador Allali urged the participants to follow up on the findings and recommendations that came out of the regional process and make the proposed changes a reality. He stressed how those in need of safety, food, water, education and dignity cannot afford to wait any longer.



His Excellency Ambassador Hesham Youssef, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, drew attention to the increasing vulnerability, environmental degradation and growing disparity in wealth in the region. He also spoke of the gap between the level of humanitarian needs and available resources, emphasizing the importance of the WHS as an opportunity to bring different stakeholders together to address these persistent challenges.

Ambassador Youssef expressed concern that in 2014 humanitarian needs had amounted to US\$17 billion globally, with only half of these needs being met. In 2015, responding to humanitarian needs is estimated to cost US\$16.5 billion and will likely increase further amidst developments both globally and in the region. He noted the challenge this presents and stressed the need to strengthen and reform the international humanitarian

system in order to cope.

Praising countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey for hosting and supporting Syrian refugees, the ambassador called on the international community to do more to ensure equitable burden sharing. He paid tribute to donors from the region for their humanitarian efforts and thanked Kuwait for hosting the Syria pledging conferences.

Ambassador Youssef called on participants at the regional consultation to focus on and prioritize the needs of women and children in their discussions and to explore ways of addressing youth participation in extremist and terrorist groups. He also called for strengthening early warning, conflict management and peace building capacities to prevent the region becoming a 'failed region'. He concluded by urging participants to meet the expectations placed on the WHS process by formulating concrete solutions that address the many challenges currently being faced in the region.



Ms. Valerie Amos, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, underscored the importance of the WHS against the backdrop of current global developments such as urbanization, population growth, conflict and climate change and their impact on humanitarian action. She stressed that these changes have significantly impacted the MENA region, with conflict and violence leading to tumultuous shifts that have affected millions of people from Libya to Palestine and from Yemen to Syria and Iraq.

These changes have put the global humanitarian system under increasing strain with current needs going beyond its capacity to cope. Ms. Amos praised the role that governments and communities in the region are playing in hosting the displaced, including in Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey, despite the burden placed on public services, infrastructure and the local economy. She also highlighted the leading role played by regional donors, such as Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in raising funds and responding to humanitarian needs.

Ms. Amos called for strengthened relationships and networks between regional organizations, humanitarian actors, the private sector and academia to create knowledge, additional capacity and expertise in the humanitarian field. She also emphasized the importance of putting affected people front and center in humanitarian response efforts.

The World Humanitarian Summit is a unique opportunity to deliver a more peaceful, prosperous, stable and sustainable future for all, Ms. Amos argued, and called on participants to use the summit process as an opportunity to formulate solutions to key challenges such as how best to protect civilians, safeguard humanitarian access, address the gap between humanitarian needs and available funds and create a diverse and inclusive global humanitarian system.

Note: The above are summaries of the high-level opening remarks.

Please visit www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_mena for a full video recording of the opening session.

PRESENTATION ON THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT GLOBAL PROCESS



Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the World Humanitarian Summit secretariat, explained the background for the World Humanitarian Summit. She stated that the increasing number of crises and humanitarian needs are putting the international humanitarian system and local response efforts under growing stress and emphasized the need for new and innovative ways to respond to humanitarian needs in today's riskier, more unpredictable and resource-constrained world.

Dr. Mahmood described how discussions during the WHS consultations to date have converged around six key issues. First, making affected people prime agents of response, by giving them a stronger voice and choice in how their needs are addressed; second, localizing preparedness and response, by responding to the strong call from countries, communities and local organizations for their greater lead in risk management and emergency response; third, overcoming the humanitarian and development divide to strengthen and build resilience to recurrent and protracted crises; fourth, reinforcing humanitarian action in conflict situations by confronting violations of international humanitarian law and finding new ways to ensure that affected people have access to assistance and protection; fifth, adjusting the international humanitarian system and finance mechanisms by re-calibrating them to deal with different types and scales of crises; and sixth, creating the right conditions to promote innovation and the changes needed to better prepare for future challenges.

She described how further consultations with a wide number of stakeholders, such as the private sector, youth and faith-based leaders and organizations will take place in the lead-up to the summit, with all findings feeding into the WHS global consultation in October 2015 in Geneva. Following the global consultation, a Secretary-General's report will be produced. The report will establish the vision for the World Humanitarian Summit, set out critical areas for action, and include recommendations on how to take these forward.

Dr. Mahmood stressed the importance of not letting the opportunity to create meaningful change pass by and stated that the summit must be used to reaffirm the commitment to humanity and the fundamental principles that underpin humanitarian work. She underscored the necessity of the summit being a platform from which innovative partnerships and initiatives can be launched. She recognized that some of the summit's recommendations may be implemented immediately whereas others may require further follow-up through inter-governmental processes. Dr. Mahmood hoped that the process of change for the MENA region would begin with the regional consultation and not wait until the summit in Istanbul.

PRESENTATION ON THE PREPARATORY STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS IN THE REGION



Ms. Rema Jamous-Imseis, Head of OCHA's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, presented the main findings of the preparatory consultations that were conducted across the MENA region between May 2014 and February 2015. Addressing the participants on behalf of the Regional Steering Group, she explained that the goal of the process was to raise awareness about the WHS among a wide range of humanitarian actors across the region and, more importantly, to seek their views on how to improve the future of humanitarian action.

In total, the preparatory stakeholder consultations reached 1,230 people across all 17 countries of the MENA region, including over 400 organizations from a wide range of constituencies. Ms. Jamous-Imseis emphasized the conscious effort made to consult a large number of civil society organizations in the region, given that they are often at the frontline of humanitarian response, embedded in the communities they serve. Refugees, internally displaced people, migrants and impacted host communities were also consulted, in line with the summit's commitment to keep affected people at the heart of the discussions. In addition, a number of consultations were held to capture the different views and perspectives of Member States, United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations, national societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, youth and the media. Ms. Jamous-Imseis praised the efforts of the Regional Steering Group in guiding the stakeholder consultations and ensuring local ownership of the process.

Summarizing the views and observations of the wide variety of stakeholders consulted, Ms. Jamous-Imseis said that people and organizations across the region were surprisingly unified in their hopes and concerns. She highlighted that respondents had articulated a clear message: humanitarian aid cannot be a substitute for political action. They consistently expressed outrage at the staggering level of human casualties and suffering witnessed in the region, declaring the current situation unacceptable and calling for solutions that tackle the root causes of vulnerability and distress.

Ms. Jamous-Imseis explained that the preparatory consultations with stakeholders in the MENA region identified eleven priority humanitarian issues. These issues were presented in detail in the stakeholder analysis report, which was distributed to all participants prior to the regional consultation. The full report is available at: www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_mena.

In summary, the eleven priority issues were as follows:

- **Protection of civilians:** Stakeholders identified the protection of civilians as a priority concern, with affected communities highlighting security or protection as one of their main humanitarian needs. Those consulted pointed to the increasing scale and severity of attacks against civilians and expressed frustration at the overall lack of accountability for violations of international law.

- **Humanitarian access:** Restrictions on the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach people in need were seen as one of the most pervasive challenges to effective humanitarian action in the region. Affected communities stressed the negative impact that limited access has on their lives and livelihoods and humanitarian organizations called for governments and other actors to ensure the protection of aid workers and unimpeded access, including through mitigating the negative impact of counter-terrorism legislations.
- **Responding to protracted crisis and displacement:** The protracted nature of displacement in the region is pushing the humanitarian system far beyond the boundaries of what it was designed to manage, with a handful of countries bearing the burden of hosting the displaced. There was consensus on the need to find innovative ways of sustainably meeting people's needs with dignity, including by greater burden sharing and focusing on building resilience through better cooperation between humanitarian and development actors.
- **Principles of humanitarian action:** The core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence were widely accepted among stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on the importance of providing assistance on the basis of need and without discrimination. Yet, in practice, many humanitarian organizations and affected people felt that the principles are not well respected, citing appearance, faith and political prerogatives as often determining the criteria for who receives assistance.
- **Engagement with affected communities:** Stakeholders underscored the importance of meaningful involvement of affected communities in all phases of humanitarian action, highlighting that they are often best-placed to determine their own needs. This should include frequent communication with communities and devolving some decision-making power to them, with the aim of giving choice to affected people, strengthening their response role and ensuring their specific needs are being met effectively.
- **Emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction:** Preparatory consultations confirmed the importance of preparing for emergencies and reducing risks; yet stakeholders regretted how investment in preparedness remains low in the region. They were also concerned about the lack of response to early warning signs and limited knowledge and capacity of how to effectively prepare for crises.
- **Coordination and collaboration between international, regional and domestic institutions:** Stakeholders called for humanitarian coordination mechanisms to become more inclusive and representative of the breadth of humanitarian responders in the region. Moreover, they emphasized the importance of strengthening and building local response capacity, calling on international organizations to play a greater role in this regard.
- **Humanitarian financing:** There was widespread recognition that the level of available resources is failing to adequately meet the scale of demand in the region. This led stakeholders to emphasize the need to better utilize existing humanitarian resources and to mobilize additional sources of funding. There were also calls for donors to fulfill their pledges and for more partnerships with financial institutions and the private sector. The importance of donor coordination was also highlighted, particularly between international donors and those from the region.
- **Enhancing the role of media:** Humanitarian organizations and affected communities recognized the power of the media in shaping the perceptions and response of individuals, organizations and governments to humanitarian crises. They called for objective reporting of humanitarian issues, whilst media representatives emphasized the need for training of journalists and for greater openness and transparency of humanitarian organizations in providing information.

- **Empowering youth in humanitarian action:** The role of youth in humanitarian response was widely recognized, including through volunteerism, which has a long history and tradition in the region. There were calls to strengthen volunteer networks and train youth in order to promote their coherent and consistent engagement in humanitarian response.
- **Migration:** As the region continues to see large migration flows, stakeholders noted the vulnerability of migrants and expressed concern about exposure to human trafficking, sexual, social and economic exploitation and journeys fraught with risks. They also highlighted the impact of crises in the region on international migrants, many of whom have become stranded in conflict areas.

Ms. Jamous-Imseis concluded her presentation with a plea to the stakeholders present at the regional consultation to capitalize on their rich experience and suggest ways of addressing the main challenges that emerged from the preparatory consultations. In so doing, the regional consultation for MENA was an opportunity to ensure the voices and concerns of the region shape the focus and outcomes of the summit in Istanbul.

HIGH-LEVEL REMARKS



His Excellency Imad Najib Fakhoury, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, stated that unprecedented political, economic and social upheaval in the MENA region is the cause of growing human suffering and humanitarian crises. Stressing that humanitarian needs must be addressed in conjunction with developmental and resilience concerns, he underlined the need to resolve the crises in the region through political solutions.

Mr. Fakhoury commended the generosity of countries in the region for opening their doors to Syrian refugees and urged the international community to further support them in order to lessen the impact of the crisis, preserve critical development gains, sustain social and economic stability and meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Mr. Fakhoury highlighted the role of Jordan in hosting millions of refugees over the last few

decades and expressed gratitude for those that have assisted and supported response efforts in Jordan to date. However, given that the Syria crisis has stretched the limits of Jordanian resources, Mr. Fakhoury called upon donors to further assist Jordan in meeting the requirements of the Jordan National Response Plan 2015.

Mr. Fakhoury welcomed Mr. Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, whose presence, he said, signaled an important step towards achieving the required linkages between humanitarian and development cooperation with the aim of promoting more effective and coherent assistance.



Mr. Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, noted that in recognition of the deteriorating humanitarian situation globally and in the region, the WHS is needed now more than ever. He identified two key areas of urgent reform: first, making the humanitarian system truly universal, based on inclusive values, and second, addressing the current shortcomings of humanitarian financing and how funds are utilized.

Mr. Guterres noted how despite ongoing efforts, the current humanitarian system is not global but rather UN-centric and Western-inspired. He argued that it is possible to build a universal humanitarian system and noted that the central elements of modern-day humanitarianism – international refugee law, international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles – are rooted in the cultures and religions of numerous civiliza-

tions around the world and can all be found, for example, in Islamic traditions and Islamic law, as well as in the teachings and holy writings of other faith traditions. He also noted how humanitarian efforts are grounded in the universal values of generosity and solidarity.

Mr. Guterres called for greater recognition of the universality of humanitarian values and for current coordination systems, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, to adapt and better include the diversity of humanitarian actors. He urged all stakeholders to better work together,

guided by their shared values, and to address people's needs in a coordinated manner.

On the growing funding shortfall, Mr. Guterres identified three necessary measures to address the problem. First, the need to build new partnerships that increase available funds and ensure effective coordination to avoid gaps and overlap and reduce overhead costs.

Second, Mr. Guterres called for early and more consistent involvement of development actors in crisis situations. He noted the need for countries like Jordan to receive development funding despite their middle-income status, given that they provide the first line of defense to the international community's collective security, which should be recognized in development cooperation policies.

Third, the Mr. Guterres regretted that humanitarian funding is currently given on a voluntary basis and suggested that at least for the largest humanitarian emergencies, such as the Syria and Iraq crises, humanitarian response should be able to rely partially on assessed contributions. He emphasized that these emergencies are a collective international responsibility and should not be shouldered by a handful of countries alone.

Mr. Guterres concluded by expressing concern about the inability of the international community to prevent and resolve the conflicts that are at the root of humanitarian crises. He urged all stakeholders, including governments, civil society and international organizations, to implement these reforms and draw attention to increasing human suffering and the need for adequate funding to assist affected people and to support countries like Jordan in their response efforts.

Note: The above are summaries of the high-level remarks.

Please visit www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_mena for a full video recording of the remarks.

THE “SPIRIT OF HUMANITY” PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



A photography contest on the theme “Spirit of Humanity” was organized ahead of the regional consultation, calling on photographers to document and share moments of solidarity and hope amidst increasing human suffering and humanitarian needs in the MENA region. 459 submissions were received between 25 January and 15 February 2015, depicting both tragic consequences of conflict and images of hope and humanity. The most inspiring photographs were selected by a jury composed of humanitarian and photography professionals on the basis of technical merit, relevance to the theme, originality, composition and impact. The pictures were displayed at the regional consultation and the two winners, with photographs from Syria and Gaza, were awarded professional cameras.



Photo: Islam Mardini



Photo: Mohammed Muhaisen

THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main discussions at the regional consultation meeting took place in thematic group sessions, facilitated by regional and global experts. The Regional Steering Group had selected six key issues of focus that were the most consistently raised in the preparatory stakeholder consultations: protection of civilians, humanitarian access, protracted crises and displacement, localizing humanitarian response, emergency preparedness and humanitarian financing. The main outcomes and recommendations of the discussions were captured in the co-chairs' summary, presented on the final day of the regional consultation and annexed to this report. The following sections outline in more detail the substance of the discussions and highlight the key recommendations that emerged from the breakout sessions and subsequent plenary discussions.

Protection of civilians



Photo: Mustafa Moayed

The group discussions focused on two main aspects related to the protection of civilians: accountability and legal frameworks and the roles of various actors in protecting civilians.

Participants uniformly echoed the conclusion of the preparatory stakeholder analysis: protection of civilians is a priority concern in the MENA region. They lamented the increasing scale and severity of attacks against civilians, including in Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Syria and Yemen. They expressed concern about civilians bearing the brunt of conflicts and not being sufficiently protected. The failure to protect civilians was seen to be due, in part, to the inability and/or unwillingness of governments and non-state actors **to address the root causes of protection concerns**. Participants highlighted how political prerogatives and interests often override humanitarian imperatives, with the UN Security Council strongly criticized.

There were calls for greater respect of international legal instruments that govern the protection of civilians. The **primary responsibility of states** in this regard was emphasized in all breakout discussions, with strong calls for greater accountability for those that violate these laws. Participants put forward several recommendations for governments: First, to **ratify international instru-**

ments pertaining to the protection of civilians, in particular the second Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and the 1951 Refugee Convention; second, to **establish national committees on international humanitarian law (IHL)** where these are not yet in place, and ensure relevant national legislation is in line with international law; third, to **provide IHL training** for armed forces, the police and other relevant officials, with the support of donors and participation of humanitarian actors where necessary; and fourth, to **monitor the application of IHL and hold perpetrators of violations accountable** through the establishment of national or international mechanisms or to activate those that are already in place. This included calls for the better use of **international courts**, notably the International Criminal Court. There was concern at perceived double standards in condemning and calling to account those that violate IHL in the region, with participants calling for greater enforcement in an objective and universal manner.

Participants urged **regional organizations**, such as the Arab Maghreb Union, Gulf Cooperation Council, League of Arab States and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to **strengthen their role in the protection of civilians**. They put forward a number of suggestions in this regard: first, they proposed the adoption of **regional instruments to protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs)**, building on the experience from other regions, citing the Kampala Convention² as an example; second, they suggested establishing **regional mechanisms to monitor violations of IHL, civilian casualties and access issues**; and third, they called for **fostering consensus among Member States** on concrete measures to protect civilians in conflicts. Some participants also suggested that regional organizations could act as a “moral authority” to **guide** their Member States on better protecting civilians from violence.



There were demands from participants for **parties to conflict, including armed groups, to meet their obligations in respecting IHL and facilitating the work of humanitarian actors** by ensuring access and lifting restrictions that preclude their work. Many participants suggested that this requires humanitarian actors to engage in **dialogue** with all parties to a conflict. In line with IHL and against the backdrop of concerns about the negative impact of counter-terrorism legislation on

humanitarian action, participants emphasized the need to encourage rather than criminalize this engagement with armed groups for legitimate humanitarian purposes.

The breakout groups also addressed the role of the **international donor community** in the protection of civilians. Participants requested donors to **ensure sufficient funding for protection activities** in addition to supporting the delivery of material assistance. They encouraged donors to **support initiatives aimed at promoting respect for IHL and human rights** throughout the region, including by funding IHL training to their government counterparts and supporting the implementation of legal protection frameworks. Donors were also encouraged to support initiatives that strengthen preparedness to protect civilians in potential conflicts.

² Formally known as the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

Participants discussed the role of **humanitarian organizations** in protecting civilians, including in situations where governments are unable or unwilling to fulfill their protection responsibilities. They re-emphasized that primary responsibility lies with states but that **protection should be at the heart of humanitarian action** with mechanisms for achieving this objective in line with institutional mandates and strengths. Identifying protection concerns should be an integral part of humanitarian needs assessments and programming, including by **tackling the protection needs of specific groups**, such as women, young men, children, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, religious minorities, detainees, the elderly and those living with disabilities. It was also deemed important that these activities are effectively **coordinated between and within different sectors** to avoid gaps in protection.

Participants suggested that humanitarian organizations should **collectively advocate for adequate space to provide protection** in situations where their operations are hindered by governments or parties to a conflict, for example by restricting access. Some participants also called for humanitarian organizations to enhance their capacities in protection **through training and mentoring of their staff** and to adjust their protection approaches to increasingly urban contexts, in which they cater to specific needs and sensitize host communities to protection issues.

Participants recognized the **critical role played by civil society organizations**, including the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in protecting civilians. This included applying and promoting local customs and practices in protecting civilians and disseminating information on international law to IDPs and refugees, as well as to their host communities. Civil society organizations were encouraged to **train their staff on IHL and International Human Rights Law (IHRL)**, with support from international partners, and to disseminate information about legal rights already during peacetime as a preparedness action. Participants suggested that local civil society organizations, including youth groups, use their collective power to **lobby their governments** and other actors to better protect civilians.

Participants in several groups called on the **United Nations to review the Human Rights Up Front initiative** and to translate it into concrete actions. They urged the UN to maintain a central focus on IHRL and IHL irrespective of organizational mandates or political pressure.

Several groups discussed the influence the media can have on the protection of civilians. The media was seen as a powerful tool to raise awareness of IHL violations, but was also seen as having a negative impact on safety and protection, when humanitarian reporting is politicized and sensationalized. Participants called for **close cooperation between humanitarian actors and the media**, with the aim of promoting humanitarian values and highlighting protection needs.

The universality of protection of civilians as a principle was discussed in several groups. Participants pointed to various protection **frameworks and practices that exist in** the region, such as Sharia Law, which are comparable with those found in the Geneva Conventions. They called for further **exploration of the synergies** between these and international legal protection frameworks, with the intention of developing context-specific practices and interventions that can better protect civilians on the ground. For example, some participants advocated for more systematic implementation of Islamic traditions, such as Al Ash-hor Al Haram, which calls for pauses in fighting during holy months of the year.

The role of **religious leaders and scholars in addressing protection issues** and facilitating assistance whenever this is possible was emphasized, although some participants cautioned against over-emphasizing the impartiality of such leaders when protecting and assisting people in need, arguing that they can sometimes favour their own constituencies. Overall, there were calls for **greater dialogue** and engagement with religious leaders on how protection frameworks and practices could be better implemented on the ground.

Key recommendations

- Governments should ratify international instruments pertaining to the protection of civilians and to ensure national legislation is in conformity with international law;
- Governments, regional organizations and the international community should hold perpetrators of violations accountable in an objective and universal manner;
- Regional organizations should adopt instruments that protect and assist IDPs, building on experiences from other regions;
- International donor community should support protection activities and initiatives aimed at promoting respect for IHL and human rights throughout the region;
- Parties to conflict should meet their international legal obligations, including by ensuring access and lifting restrictions that impede humanitarian action;
- Humanitarian organizations should identify protection concerns as an integral part of humanitarian needs assessments and programming, taking into account the specific needs of different groups;
- All stakeholders should explore synergies between protection frameworks grounded in international law and those based on other traditions and norms in order to develop context-specific practices to better protect civilians; and
- All stakeholders should support humanitarian dialogue between humanitarian organizations and all concerned parties to promote the protection of civilians.

Humanitarian access



Photo: Catherine Ward

The group discussions focused on three main aspects related to humanitarian access: the role of governments and non-state actors in facilitating and/or denying access, humanitarian actors' proximity to affected people and dialogue with all parties to conflict.

Participants agreed with stakeholders consulted across the region during the preparatory consultations: **limited humanitarian access has become a significant obstacle to meeting needs**. This was seen to be the case both in terms of affected people's access to humanitarian assistance and protection as well as humanitarian organizations' access to people in need. Participants recognized that access is critical to effective humanitarian action, including understanding the numbers of people affected and their specific needs, if organizations are to respond in an impartial, timely and dignified manner.

While re-affirming the principle of state sovereignty, participants called on **governments and other parties to conflict, including armed groups, to facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access**. They discussed the role of governments in situations where they are party to a conflict and called on them to uphold their responsibility in ensuring people have access to life-saving assistance in line with IHL. Participants also noted the bureaucratic obstacles faced by many humanitarian organizations in the region and urged **governments to grant visas and ease administrative procedures** to facilitate timely and effective response. The situation of people in besieged areas and occupied territories was noted as particularly concerning; participants encouraged all parties to allow people's freedom of movement to access the assistance and protection they require.

In situations where a government limits humanitarian access, participants called on **international and regional organizations to exert diplomatic pressure on their Member States to facilitate access**. Regional organizations, such as the LAS and OIC, were also encouraged to **activate existing resolutions on facilitating access**.

The breakout groups discussed **cross-border operations** as a means to accessing populations in need. Some participants emphasized state sovereignty and the consent of the state as the over-

riding principle in determining the legality of such operations. Others placed more importance on the humanitarian imperative and the moral obligation to assist people in need, arguing that state sovereignty should not be used as a justification for blocking relief, especially in situations where the government is not granting sufficient access. Participants called on **governments and organizations with prior experience in providing cross-border assistance to share lessons learned** with other humanitarian actors to help reach populations in need.

Participants advocated for the **promotion of respect for the principles of humanitarian action and IHL**, as well as for **identifying complementary normative frameworks drawn from local and regional cultural and faith traditions**. They also called for the development of dedicated **training** for humanitarian actors, affected populations, governments and donors on these principles and frameworks. Humanitarian organizations were further encouraged to **establish a platform to advocate for humanitarian access** and for respect for the principles of humanitarian action and IHL.

Participants repeatedly called for the **de-politicization of humanitarian action** and for ensuring that assistance is provided in a transparent manner and on the basis of need alone. They criticized the **UN Security Council for politicizing humanitarian issues and decried the use of vetoes**. They **further lamented the Security Council's failure** to enforce existing resolutions on humanitarian access and cross-border assistance. Some argued that the **media** should be encouraged to shed light on politicized humanitarian decision-making as a means of exerting pressure to improve access and raise awareness of the issue.

Breakout discussions addressed the need for **humanitarian organizations to negotiate access with all parties to a conflict** as well as tribal, community and faith leaders in order to reach affected people. The principles of humanitarian action were widely re-affirmed and deemed important for facilitating humanitarian operations in conflict areas. Participants reiterated the view that humanitarian dialogue should not be criminalized but encouraged by donors and national governments. Some participants proposed using mediators or third parties to facilitate their access.



While the importance of **countering terrorism** in the region was recognized, participants regretted its negative impact on humanitarian access. Counter-terrorism legislation was seen to particularly hamper the ability of humanitarian organizations to negotiate with non-state actors and receive financial transfers from international donors. Donor-imposed restrictions on funding were also seen as an obstacle to implementing programmes and priorities based on need. Participants therefore called on **donor agencies and national governments for greater clarity of the implications of these laws to safeguard their ability to operate**. They proposed that humanitarian organizations document the impact of counter-terrorism measures in order to encourage changes to laws that restrict humanitarian access. They also called for greater **transparency and dialogue between humanitarian organizations and donors** to identify ways to reach people without aid groups risking prosecution for legitimate humanitarian action. Such dialogue should include regional stakeholders, institutions and policy-making bodies involved in

developing counter-terrorism laws, including the African Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States, the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The importance of **close proximity of humanitarian organizations to the people they serve** was deemed essential for building trust and acceptance with affected communities, thereby increasing humanitarian access. Participants suggested that humanitarian organizations raise awareness of their programmes, mandates and targeting criteria among communities, including the government, military and armed groups. They were also advised to work closely with local community representatives and faith leaders. In situations where proximity to people is deemed impossible, innovative and creative options should be explored, such as mapping needs through telecommunication technology.

Participants condemned the high number of attacks against humanitarian workers and property in the region, noting that humanitarians are also frequently attacked by criminal gangs and armed tribes. They demanded action to **protect those providing humanitarian assistance**, with some debate over whether humanitarian organizations should hire private security companies to protect their staff. One suggestion put forward was for the international community to **hold states and non-state actors accountable and financially liable** if they deliberately attack humanitarian workers or cause financial loss to the humanitarian sector, for example by damaging medical and educational facilities.

Given their knowledge of the context and their longstanding relations with the communities they work for, participants called for strengthening the role of **local organizations and volunteer groups** in aid delivery, including in situations where access is limited. Participants advocated for capacity building at the local level, ideally before a crisis, and hiring senior staff locally rather than filling key positions with international staff. They placed emphasis on shared ownership of humanitarian programming, rather than international agencies “remotely managing” their local partners. A concern was raised, however, about the transfer of risk in insecure environments from international to local organizations. International organizations were encouraged to ensure adequate staff safety and security for local partners through the provision of financial resources, assets and insurance schemes, and for donors to fund such security measures as required.

Key recommendations

- Governments and other parties to conflicts, including armed groups, should facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access in line with humanitarian principles;
- Regional organizations should encourage Member States to facilitate humanitarian access, including through activating or implementing existing mechanisms in this regard;
- All stakeholders should promote respect for the principles of humanitarian action and IHL, as well as identify complementary normative frameworks drawn from local traditions, with aim of promoting access and de-politicizing humanitarian action;
- Humanitarian organizations should consistently negotiate with all concerned parties to better reach affected people and to ensure close proximity to the people they serve;
- Humanitarian organizations, donor governments, regional organizations and Member States should initiate a regional dialogue to identify ways of mitigating the negative effects of counter-terrorism legislation on legitimate humanitarian work; and
- All stakeholders should promote respect for and protection of humanitarian workers and volunteers.

Protracted crises and displacement



Photo: Amjad Yaghi

The breakout discussions focused on four main aspects related to protracted crises and displacement: fostering durable solutions, bridging the humanitarian-development divide, developing knowledge and expertise and responding to the needs of the displaced arising from their particular context.

Participants concurred with stakeholders consulted in the preparatory process: that the increase in protracted conflict and long-term displacement in the MENA region is pushing the humanitarian system far beyond the boundaries of what it was designed to manage. The failure to find political solutions to address the root causes of these situations has further increased the protracted nature of humanitarian crises in the region. The regional dimensions of these crises have also impacted the number of countries affected. As a result, participants called for **stronger regional and national conflict resolution mechanisms** that could help end these crises and the resulting human suffering.

Discussions focused on the burden placed on countries in the region that have welcomed large numbers of refugees, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey. They called on the **international community to more equitably share the burden of hosting refugees** and provide greater support to impacted host countries and communities, whose ability to continue supporting refugees has declined as the crises continue. A number of suggestions were put forward in this regard: first, response efforts should give priority to host governments and local institutions **building, upgrading and expanding national infrastructure and service delivery**; second, there should be an increased focus on **durable solutions for displaced populations**, including the development of a fixed quota for third country resettlement and supporting voluntary return under appropriate circumstances; third, countries dependent on labour migration in the region should be encouraged to **provide refugees with temporary residency and employment opportunities** that take advantage of their skills and expertise based on an analysis of market needs and benefits for host communities; and fourth, **international financial institutions** should provide investments under favourable terms **to help middle-income countries rapidly shoulder the burden** of hosting refugees.

All the breakout groups highlighted the importance of **bridging the efforts of humanitarian and development actors** in assisting displaced populations and host communities. Participants called for continued life-saving assistance and emergency relief, including cash assistance, coupled with recovery and sustainable livelihood interventions. The latter could include temporary employment and income generating opportunities that support the local economy and investments in basic services and infrastructure, benefiting both the displaced and the host communities. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in response to the Syria crisis was seen as a positive development in promoting this approach and participants stressed that **development interventions need to come at an early stage of a crisis and be implemented in partnership with national authorities and the private sector** to ensure sustainability, local ownership and alignment with national priorities. The importance of **engaging host and displaced communities in the design, implementation and evaluation** of these interventions was also highlighted. There were also discussions on the importance of registering and counting the displaced as a necessary basis for understanding their basic needs and the levels of assistance and protection they require.



Some participants expressed frustration at the repeated but fruitless efforts to more sustainably respond to the needs of the displaced, arguing that promoting resilience and bridging the humanitarian-development divide have been discussed for several years without significant results. Thus, to ensure that lessons are learned, there were suggestions to **establish a forum of experts** that convenes periodically for particular protracted crises, mandated to evaluate the extent to which donors and humanitarian and

development actors are effectively building resilience and coordinating among themselves and their national counterparts.

The breakout groups also addressed the increasingly urban character of displacement crises in the region, recognizing that the overwhelming majority of the displaced in the region have settled in urban areas rather than in camps. As result, participants called on **governments**, including at the municipal level, as well as **donors and humanitarian actors, to take into account the urban context in humanitarian and development programs.**

Participants acknowledged that more thorough research and knowledge creation could support and inform sustainable responses to displaced people's needs. This led to a recommendation to **establish academic, research and training institutes** that focus on responding to protracted crises and promoting holistic approaches to crisis management, including the prevention of future displacement.

Concerns were raised about people's vulnerability to human trafficking, with participants calling for **greater counter-trafficking efforts in all phases of a crisis, including awareness-raising interventions and legal and humanitarian response.** Migrants were deemed particularly vulnerable and there were suggestions to expand regular migration programmes, which would mitigate irregular migration and exposure to trafficking.

Discussions also addressed the psychosocial impact of violent conflict and protracted displacement, with participants calling on humanitarian organizations to prioritize the provision of **targeted psychosocial support**. The disproportionate impact of armed conflict and displacement on women and children was raised, with a subsequent need to continue to place special programmatic emphasis on their specific protection and assistance requirements. Given the rise of extremist groups in the region, participants warned of the risk of radicalization among youth in the absence of long term prospects for education, employment and durable solutions.

Key recommendations

- International community should more equitably share the burden of hosting refugees and to provide greater support to impacted host countries and communities, including efforts to build, upgrade and expand national infrastructure and service delivery to displaced and host populations;
- Countries that are dependent on labor migration in the region should consider providing refugees with temporary residency and employment opportunities based on an analysis of market needs and benefits for host communities;
- All stakeholders should improve opportunities for durable solutions for displaced populations, including through the development of a fixed quota for third country resettlement and supporting voluntary return under appropriate circumstances;
- Development actors should collaborate with their humanitarian counterparts from an early stage of a crisis and implement development programs in partnership with national authorities and the private sector to ensure sustainability and local ownership and alignment with national priorities;
- Establish academic, research and training institutes that focus on responding to protracted displacement and promoting holistic approaches to crisis management, including prevention of future displacement; and
- Governments, including at the municipal level, as well as donors and humanitarian actors should further take into account the urban context in humanitarian and development interventions and build on current urban programming.

Localizing humanitarian response



The group discussions focused on two main aspects related to localizing humanitarian response: strengthening the capacity of national and local actors in preparing for and responding to humanitarian crises and the relationship between domestic actors and international organizations.

Echoing the findings of the preparatory stakeholder analysis, participants called for **strengthening the leadership role and capacity of domestic institutions and actors, such as national authorities, civil society organizations and affected communities** in humanitarian preparedness and response. Governments were acknowledged to have the primary responsibility in humanitarian action, whereas civil society and affected people were perceived to possess the best knowledge of the local context and needs. Participants also cautioned, however, that there are different capacities and dynamics across the region and that localizing humanitarian response should not be a process in which the burden of response is simply shifted from the international community to domestic actors. Instead, there needs to be a gradual process based on partnerships to strengthen local capacity and leadership opportunities.

For this process to take place, participants emphasized the importance of governments developing and building on **national disaster preparedness legislation and plans** that set out roles and responsibilities among national authorities, civil society organizations and the private sector, amongst others, and allocate necessary resources to carry out this role. Civil society actors were particularly vocal in calling for **regulatory frameworks** that promote their ability to respond and highlighted the importance of freedom of association and access to international funding.

Most group sessions highlighted general discontent with the approach of the international humanitarian community, which was seen as often intervening in a crisis without taking into account local structures and capacities. For example, international coordination structures were deemed to be mainly concerned with the needs of international organizations in terms of information shared, resources required to engage, language used and the need to meet donor commitments. Furthermore, international organizations were perceived to have a vested interest in prioritizing and promoting their role. For instance, they often hire the most qualified staff from local organizations, act as intermediaries for the distribution of international funds and do not have clear exit strategies through

which they hand over responsibilities to national authorities or civil society. A recommendation was put forward for there to be clear **exit strategies for international organizations in each crisis context, in which plans are put in place to strengthen and build local capacity, including facilitating direct access to international funding.** These plans should have **common indicators** to ensure that the transition is appropriate to the level of needs and domestic capacity. These plans were deemed particularly important in protracted crises where national actors have a long term role to play.

The role of regional organizations was also highlighted, with participants seeking the **activation of the humanitarian coordination mechanism called for by the League of Arab States** in March 2014 and for **strengthening the Gulf Cooperation Council coordination structures** among national crisis management rooms. These regional tools were deemed important to enhancing local capacity and collaboration between national actors in the region. In fact, to build capacity in the region, participants emphasized the need to **establish a regional non-political body that focuses on building the capacity of civil society organizations** in humanitarian preparedness and response. Examples were shared from other regions, such as the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, as possible models to build on. There were also suggestions to develop guidelines and share good practices in local capacity building to ensure that these efforts have a sustainable impact. Some participants were critical of current efforts, often deemed to enhance local engagement with international response mechanisms rather than to build local leadership.

Participants suggested that greater collaboration between local, national and international actors requires a sustained effort to **build trust and meaningful partnerships.** They highlighted a lack of transparency and clear power imbalances between international and national stakeholders, with one suggestion to base these relationships on **the Principles of Partnership.**



³ The **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** was mentioned as a global policymaking platform which impacts humanitarian action across

the region but is composed of mainly Western actors. There were calls to **review the IASC and for it to be adapted to better reflect the diversity of humanitarian actors.** Its regional decentralization was seen as a way to make it more inclusive and relevant. Another example given was the UN-led Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), which participants argued are Western-biased and rarely include national organizations and in a superficial way. They called for **greater local representation in the UN HCTs** and for these fora to be more accessible by using local languages or translation at minimum.

Participants stressed that efforts to localize humanitarian response should focus on ensuring effective **engagement with and accountability to affected communities.** Whilst many national authorities and humanitarian organizations claim to put people at the heart of their work, participants argued that in practice such efforts are falling short. They suggested putting in place **mechanisms**

³ The Principles of Partnership were endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform in July 2007. They recognize both the diversity and interdependence of humanitarian actors and strive to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action and partnership based on the following principles: equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. For further information, see <http://goo.gl/uzFFqL>.

that engage affected communities in all stages of preparedness and response, including contingency planning, needs assessments, programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Participants also called for enhancing the role of affected communities as first responders through **training, forming associations and providing them with access to resources**.

In addition, effective **communication with affected and vulnerable communities** was stressed as an important part of engaging them in humanitarian action. New information and communication technologies and the wide use of social media in the region were seen to offer opportunities to enhance two-way dialogue with these communities, including in contexts where there is limited humanitarian access. **Engaging the media** was also seen as an opportunity for further outreach and sensitization to humanitarian action, for example regarding humanitarian organizations' roles, responsibilities and guiding principles.

The role of youth was repeatedly highlighted in the discussions. Young people are already engaged in humanitarian activities across the region, but greater support is needed in institutionalizing and supporting their efforts, including through the **development of youth and volunteer associations** or youth branches of NGOs and community organizations.

Key recommendations

- All stakeholders should work towards strengthening the leadership role and capacity of domestic institutions and actors, such as national authorities, civil society organizations and affected communities in humanitarian preparedness and response;
- Governments should develop and build on national disaster preparedness legislation and plans that set out roles and responsibilities among national authorities, civil society organizations and the private sector, amongst others, and allocate the necessary resources to carry out this role;
- International organizations should set clear exit strategies, in which plans are put in place to strengthen and build local capacity and facilitate direct access to international funding;
- LAS should activate the resolution calling for the establishment of a humanitarian coordination mechanism passed in March 2014 and the Gulf Cooperation Council should strengthen the coordination structures among national crisis management rooms;
- Establish a regional non-political body that focuses on building the capacity of civil society organizations to prepare for and respond to disasters and humanitarian crises;
- Review the composition of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and Humanitarian Country Teams to better include and reflect the needs of a wider range of humanitarian actors from the region;
- Humanitarian organizations should establish and/or strengthen mechanisms to engage affected communities in all stages of preparedness and response, including contingency planning, needs assessment, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- All relevant stakeholders should promote the use of media and new technologies for enhancing dialogue with affected and vulnerable communities and promoting sensitization on humanitarian action; and
- Governments and humanitarian organizations should better support youth engagement in humanitarian preparedness and response, including through the development of youth and volunteer associations or youth branches of NGOs and community organizations.

Emergency preparedness



Photo: Mohamed Mousse

The group discussions focused on three main aspects related to emergency preparedness: promoting and supporting the role of governments and regional organizations, developing a better understanding of risk of preparedness and strengthening the culture of preparedness among relevant actors.

Recognizing that the frequency and severity of natural disasters has increased significantly in the last decades, participants emphasized the importance of prioritizing emergency preparedness in the MENA region. They acknowledged the centrality of governments in leading such efforts and called on national governments **to develop and build on national legislation** on emergency preparedness, including with regard to contingency planning. Where legislation exists, participants called on governments to do more to ensure its **effective implementation**, for example by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders and ensuring that they have sufficient resources and capacity to carry them out.

Participants also called for **a better understanding of risk factors** in order to ensure that preparatory action can be taken to mitigate future risks. They agreed that **multi-hazard risk analyses** should be conducted more systematically and national and regional **early warning systems** be developed and strengthened. Participants also advocated for **increasing the transparency of data on risk and vulnerability, standardizing indicators for assessment and strengthening joint efforts in research and analysis**. In this regard, there were calls for a stronger **partnership with academic, scientific and business communities** to capitalize on their respective areas of expertise and to allow for more evidence-based early warning to mobilize early action, both for natural hazards and man-made disasters.

Equally important for strengthening emergency response plans is to **implement lessons learned and best practices** from previous emergencies, and ensuring that they are institutionalized within national authorities and institutions. Some participants drew examples from the region, such as Gaza and Libya, and argued that past experiences have not been learned from and integrated into national plans. Doing so could potentially curb financial and development losses and strengthen resilience through evidence-based prevention, helping to shift the focus away from predominantly response and recovery.

Participants urged **governments to endorse regional instruments and mechanisms on emergency preparedness**. This included a recommendation for governments to **promote and facilitate the implementation of regional initiatives such as the Arab Strategy for DRR 2020**, which integrates disaster risk reduction measures in regional policies on sustainable development, climate change adaptation and disaster management coordination mechanisms.

A recommendation put forward by many participants was to have a **national contingency plan in place to clarify roles and responsibilities**, especially those of first responders. This would ensure responses of national and international actors complement existing national strategies and frameworks, enhance coordination and amplify the impact and sustainability of preparedness efforts. These contingency plans should be based on strong partnerships between national disaster management authorities and the multiple stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction activities. These partnerships could be strengthened through the **creation of national platforms** that bring these actors together to promote contingency planning and pre-disaster recovery planning.



The importance of emergency preparedness was also highlighted in the context of man-made crises, especially given the current level of conflict and displacement countries are facing in the region. Participants agreed that these preparedness efforts require greater **regional and sub-regional contingency planning** and should include building resilience and strengthening infrastructure and services. This would be more effective in coping with deteriorating crises and avoid stretching the use of humanitarian assistance beyond what is what designed to do.

Participants did emphasize, however, that the most effective preparedness strategy in these contexts is **for political actors to address the root causes** of crises.

Participants highlighted the importance of **contextualizing preparedness efforts**, since the risks faced by each country and the impact of crises differ across the region. This includes **understanding risks** and vulnerabilities in urban and rural settings.

Some participants recognized the positive role that **national armed forces** can play in emergency preparedness, addressing humanitarian needs and mobilizing resources. Capitalizing on this potential requires **improving civil-military cooperation** based on established guidelines and humanitarian principles, especially in conflict contexts.

Varying levels of experience and capacity across the region were perceived as one of the main challenges to more successful implementation of preparedness initiatives. To **strengthen capacity in emergency preparedness**, participants put forward several recommendations. First, they called for greater engagement with and support to local actors to strengthen their **ownership of disaster preparedness** and their ability to respond. Second, they emphasized the need to institutionalize **youth engagement**, whose role and contribution to humanitarian action, recovery and development was widely acknowledged and commended. Third, they urged **governments to inte-**

grate emergency preparedness in education curricula at all levels to instill a culture of prevention and rapid response. Fourth, they called for **engaging the media, networks of religious leaders and new technologies** to communicate with communities, raise awareness and foster a culture of preparedness.

Echoing findings from the preparatory stakeholder consultations, participants repeatedly emphasized that funding for emergency preparedness is insufficient and skewed towards response and recovery activities. They urged **donors and governments to commit a percentage of their budgets to emergency preparedness**, informed by the cost efficiency of disaster preparedness versus response. They also encouraged the establishment of **national and regional funding mechanisms** to support preparedness activities.

Participants suggested that **the private sector** has the potential to assume a greater role in **supporting and financing preparedness** activities and that its contribution should be explored and expanded. Some breakout groups highlighted the potential advantages of **engaging insurance companies** in emergency preparedness, acknowledging that they have an interest and experience in risk assessment and mitigation.

Key recommendations

- Governments should develop and implement national legislation on emergency preparedness, including contingency planning, setting out clear roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders;
- All stakeholders should work towards developing and strengthening national and regional early warning systems through enhancing multi-hazard risk analysis, increasing the transparency of data on risks and vulnerability, standardizing indicators for assessment and strengthening joint efforts in research and analysis;
- Governments should endorse and implement regional instruments and mechanisms on emergency preparedness, including the Arab Strategy for DRR 2020;
- Governments should create national platforms involving multiple stakeholders that promote contingency planning and pre-disaster recovery planning;
- Governments should integrate emergency preparedness in education curricula at all levels;
- Donors and governments should commit a percentage of their budgets to emergency preparedness, informed by the cost efficiency of disaster preparedness versus response; and
- Humanitarian stakeholders should engage with the private sector to help them assume a greater role in supporting and financing preparedness activities.

Humanitarian financing



The breakout group discussions focused on three main aspects related to humanitarian financing: addressing the financing gap and identifying additional sources of funding, donor principles and coordination and mitigating the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on the transfer of funds.

Participants recognized the increasing involvement of a large array of donors from within and outside of the region in responding to humanitarian needs. To address the growing financing gap, they emphasized the importance of developing **broader partnerships to mobilize additional resources required to meet increasing humanitarian needs**. There were suggestions that in response to the most severe humanitarian crises, **financing should be based on assessed contributions** to address needs and ensure equitable burden sharing. These contributions could also address donor fatigue arising from protracted crises and ensure that long-term and recurring crises are not forgotten.

All breakout groups voiced their concerns about what they perceived as a lack of donor commitment in disbursing financial pledges made at fundraising conferences in the region. Many pointed to the donor pledging conference for Gaza, held in October 2014 in Cairo, where significant amounts of money were pledged but only a fraction of them have actually been committed. Thus, there was a call for **donors to fulfill financial pledges** and to establish **follow-up mechanisms**, such as the top donors group for the Syria crisis, to ensure that pledges are received in a timely manner.

Efficient use of humanitarian financing also requires **donor coordination**, participants argued, and called on donors to report their contributions in shared databases. They suggested that **national and regional mechanisms should be established** with the aim of collecting funding information from a diverse range of actors. This was seen as an important step in improving coordination and avoiding duplication of efforts. **The League of Arab States' resolution** passed in March 2014 calling for the establishment of a coordination mechanism was suggested as one avenue for taking the proposal forward.

Participants urged humanitarian organizations to improve their efficiency by **minimizing overhead costs, improving the quality of needs assessments and making greater use of cash-based pro-**

gramming. The latter was observed to have significantly increased in the region, having proven to be an effective way of responding to humanitarian needs in contexts of functioning markets. Participants also urged humanitarian organizations to **engage with the private sector** to leverage their expertise in innovations and reduce operational costs.

All breakout groups called for **more sustainable interventions that go beyond the delivery of short-term relief.** Given the protracted nature and scale of the crises in the region, participants consistently noted that humanitarian and donor communities cannot conduct “business as usual”. This requires interventions that focus on **promoting people’s resilience and strengthening infrastructure and service delivery,** with the goal of reducing the need for humanitarian assistance in the medium to longer term and ensuring humanitarian funding is primarily used for life-saving activities. To sustain these interventions, there is a need for more **predictable, flexible and longer-term financing as well as better leveraging of development financing.**

Participants stressed the importance of mobilizing additional sources of funding to support needs. They pointed to the **culture and traditions of Islamic giving,** which could be leveraged to support regional and local humanitarian organizations. Several mechanisms were suggested, such as formalizing waqf and zakat⁴ contributions, including by **establishing a transparent regional zakat fund for humanitarian purposes.** However, some participants cautioned against creating such a fund on a regional level as every country has their own systems, with some independent and others under state jurisdiction. An alternative would therefore be to strengthen national zakat systems to incorporate humanitarian efforts. Overall, most participants highlighted the need to further the dialogue with existing institutions and experts on the subject to formulate concrete proposals on how this could be achieved in an appropriate and viable manner.

A suggestion was put forward for humanitarian organizations to **better engage the private sector** on how their resources could be mobilized to support humanitarian efforts. They were encouraged to approach the business community with ideas for partnerships in the humanitarian field, incentivized for example by tax breaks.



A **greater use of informal cash flows** was suggested as a means of diversifying humanitarian financing sources. Participants argued that more

could be done to capitalize on **diaspora networks’** remittances by encouraging those sending support back to their home countries to channel these funds towards addressing the most severe impacts of emergencies on people’s lives and livelihoods.

The impact of counter-terrorism legislation on humanitarian financing was discussed as a key challenge for organizations in terms of accessing and mobilizing resources. Many humanitarian organizations recounted experiences in which bank transfers had been blocked due to prevention measures related to terrorism concerns. While many participants recognized that **combating terrorism** is a priority in the region, they argued that more is needed to **ensure that these measures**

⁴ Waqf is an endowment in Islamic Law, usually donating a building, land or cash for Islamic charitable purposes. Zakat is an obligatory taxation of income or wealth of a Muslim, paid to several categories of those in need.

do not have a negative impact on legitimate humanitarian work. They noted with concern that some of the areas with greatest humanitarian needs in the region are where counter-terrorism measures are being most strongly applied. Humanitarian organizations therefore called for **greater clarity in the rules and regulations related to financial transfers** and for a dialogue with financial institutions on facilitating legitimate transactions. They also recognized the need for **improved transparency and accountability by humanitarian actors** as a means to build trust with financial and other institutions on the legitimacy of their work.

Key recommendations

- Humanitarian stakeholders should develop broader partnerships to mobilize additional resources required to meet increasing humanitarian needs;
- Explore the possibility of assessed contributions for the most severe humanitarian crises in order to address needs and ensure equitable burden sharing;
- Humanitarian organizations should improve their efficiency by minimizing overhead costs, improving the quality of needs assessments and making greater use of cash-based programming. They should engage with the private sector to leverage their expertise in this endeavor;
- Donors should establish follow-up mechanisms after pledging conferences to ensure commitments are fulfilled in a timely manner;
- Governments and regional organizations should establish national and regional mechanisms for tracking information on funding to improve coordination and avoid duplication of projects;
- Donors should promote more sustainable interventions in protracted crises by providing more predictable, flexible and longer-term financing and there should be better leveraging of development financing;
- Governments should encourage private sector engagement in humanitarian action by providing incentives, such as tax breaks;
- Regional and local humanitarian organizations should explore the possibility of incorporating the culture and traditions of Islamic giving to support their humanitarian efforts in the region;
- Donors and national governments should review the implications of counter-terrorism laws and regulations on humanitarian organizations' ability to receive financial transfers and for their staff to be legally protected from criminal prosecution for legitimate humanitarian work carried out in the course of their duties; and
- Governments and humanitarian organizations should engage with diaspora networks to use remittances in support of addressing humanitarian needs.

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN THE MENA REGION

A high-level panel discussion on forced displacement brought together a range of humanitarian experts from the MENA region and beyond to address ways in which displacement can be prevented now and in the future.



Dr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, stated that around nine million people had been displaced in the Middle East and North Africa region by the end of 2013, with the number increasing exponentially over the past two years, especially in Syria and Iraq. In light of these recent displacement crises, Dr. Beyani noted three key trends for displacement across the region.

First, the operating environment has made accessing those in need of assistance an increasingly difficult and dangerous task for humanitarian actors. It is thus necessary to make sure that humanitarians are able to talk to all parties to conflicts while abiding by humanitarian principles. He called for innovative ways to allow for rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, including across conflict lines and borders, to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need through the

most direct routes.

Second, regional and national actors need to strengthen their preparedness capacities in order to respond rapidly to the needs of IDPs. This can be achieved through adopting regional instruments and national policies on internal displacement. Dr. Beyani gave the example of the African Union's Kampala Convention as a successful model to follow for the region.

Third, Dr. Beyani stated that there is a shortage of effective partnerships to respond to emergency needs in urban areas, which is much needed in the MENA region, given its rapid urbanization. In this regard, he recommended fostering partnerships between humanitarian and development actors, municipalities and the private sector in all urban displacement settings, in order to find innovative solutions to meet the needs of displaced people.

In conclusion, Dr. Beyani put forth three recommendations to address the growing displacement challenge in the region. First, humanitarian protection and assistance need to be better linked at the outset of any crisis, with an eye on durable solutions for internally displaced people. Second, the resilience of vulnerable groups in protracted situations should be built through programmes in national development plans and plans of development agencies. Finally, disaster risk reduction plans should also take into consideration the most vulnerable, including IDPs, who are at particular risk of being affected by disasters.



Mr. Muhannad Hadi, Regional Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) for Middle East and North Africa, expressed concern over increasing unrest in the MENA region and the impact it will have on future generations. He highlighted the magnitude of humanitarian needs, with WFP targeting 20 million beneficiaries in 2015 compared to 6.8 million in 2010. Despite the unprecedented magnitude of the Syria crisis, he also stressed the importance of also focusing on displacement in Iraq, Libya, Palestine and Yemen.

Mr. Hadi explained that the level of displacement was driven by people's need for safety and security and the lack of affordable food. He emphasized the importance of providing displaced people with food assistance as a means to save lives but also offer a source of stability and hope. He suggested that the provision of food assistance can play a role in mitigating radicalization, since extremist groups are seeking to fill the vacuum left by humanitarian organizations in areas under their control. In light of this, Mr. Hadi stressed the importance of increasing principled humanitarian access.

In terms of addressing some of the main humanitarian challenges in the region, the Mr. Hadi argued that a new modality of work is needed for humanitarian organizations, including increased accountability to affected communities, better preservation of their dignity, increased engagement in the implementation of humanitarian programmes and greater empowerment of women. He also called for innovative partnerships with local actors, including national governments, NGOs and the private sector.

Mr. Hadi explained how funding shortfalls in the context of protracted displacement has forced WFP to reduce its budget for the Syria response by 27 per cent in 2015, despite the anticipation of further displacement. He called on donors to revisit their funding approaches and to better integrate humanitarian and development programmes, ensure more effective coordination amongst donors and promote more efficient use of existing funds.

Mr. Hadi concluded by drawing attention to the importance of promoting self-reliance, explaining how employment creation for the displaced can contribute to the local economy and promote inter-community cohesion and longer term integration efforts. He underscored that humanitarian assistance needs to be adapted to local contexts and that humanitarians should be aware of the consequences of weak economic infrastructure, a lack of preparedness and inequalities between the displaced and host communities.



Mr. Richard Wright, Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Representative Office in New York, stated that UNRWA works with over five million Palestine refugees, representing 40 per cent of the world's long-term refugees, and underscored its commitment to assisting them until a lasting solution to the Palestine refugee issue is found.

Mr. Wright highlighted that recent events in the MENA region have led to further displacement of Palestine refugees, sometimes for the second, third and even fourth time.

Since UNRWA's inception, the organization has provided a mix of humanitarian and development services to Palestine refugees, both in times of peace and in conflict. According to Mr. Wright, the agency's mandate is a useful model to examine in situations of protracted displacement as it includes a coordinated response that involves both humanitarian and developmental approaches.

Mr. Wright explained that UNRWA ensures close engagement with Palestine refugees by involving them in the provision of assistance, which in turn makes them feel that they have a stake in UNRWA.

Whilst there is a lot to be learned from the UNRWA experience, Mr. Wright cautioned against replicating UNRWA as it was created in a particular context to address a specific refugee caseload with agreement from host countries and assurances of sustained support by the international community. On funding, Mr. Wright claimed it is an ongoing challenge and reaffirmed the importance of maintaining donor support for UNRWA, warning that the lack of support could undermine the provision of services to refugees, cause potential destabilization and undermine trust in the organization.

While Mr. Wright celebrated UNRWA's success in developing human capital for over 65 years and emphasized the importance of sustainability, he stressed that the organization's prolonged existence is a reminder that humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for political action. Finding political solutions to address the underlying causes of a historic injustice is still needed and no amount of humanitarian or developmental assistance can overcome fundamental impediments to socio-economic development and livelihood opportunities, such as the blockade of Gaza, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

HIGH-LEVEL CLOSING REMARKS



His Excellency Dr. Abdullah al Matouq, United Nations Secretary-General's Humanitarian Envoy, thanked the Government of Jordan for shouldering the burden of hosting over a million Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis four years ago. He voiced concern over the number of people in need in Syria and for the overall increase of humanitarian crises in the region. He called on the humanitarian community to work towards alleviating the level of human suffering and to use the unique opportunity of the WHS to engage with the views and perspectives of Arab and Islamic humanitarian organizations.

Dr. al Matouq stressed the need for the international community to find political solutions to current crises in the region and to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and hold those that violate the law to account. He also called for greater burden sharing in hosting refugees and stressed the importance of promoting more sustainable solutions for affected people.

Dr. al Matouq also highlighted the key role of donor states and organizations that have gathered in Kuwait for the last two Syria pledging conferences and called for similar commitment at the third pledging conference that would take place on 31 March 2015 in Kuwait under the patronage of His Royal Highness Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He underscored the importance of the quarterly meeting held by the Top Donors Group for Syria in ensuring effective coordination between international donors and Arab Gulf States.

In this spirit, Dr. al Matouq called for greater collaboration between humanitarian actors to explore ways of strengthening emergency preparedness and regional and national response capacities and to work towards establishing a more inclusive and diverse humanitarian system that is better equipped to face the challenges of the region. He emphasized the unique history, culture and values of the MENA region and their potential to contribute to global humanitarian action, countering unjust accusations of terrorism and extremism against Arab and Islamic humanitarian organizations.



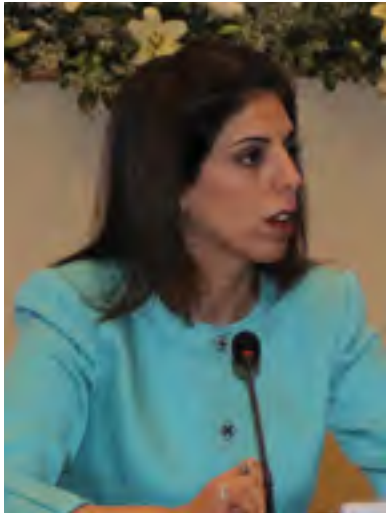
Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), commented on the changing humanitarian landscape in the MENA region and noted how it is experiencing unprecedented displacement, increasingly protracted violence and conflict and large scale violations of IHL. He noted that the number of refugees has placed significant strain on the economies and infrastructure of host countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey and how the international community is not as present, active or involved as it should be in sharing the burden of these crises.

In the current environment in which the goals and objectives of humanitarian action are interpreted differently and often integrated in political and security agendas, Mr. Maurer called for neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian action. He stressed that humanitarian principles are part of a tried and tested model that creates the necessary space for humanitarian work in difficult and evolving conflict environments and advocated for a clear and consistent approach to them.

Mr. Maurer noted that regional and protracted conflicts, together with violent extremism, are challenging the shared values of the international community and are contributing to a new reality for humanitarian action, creating more need and impacting the ability of humanitarian organizations to respond to them. Addressing such challenges requires principled but pragmatic contextual solutions to assist and protect people in need. This includes limiting the use of force, ensuring humane treatment of affected people and providing essential relief for the wounded and sick, detained persons, non-combatants and civilians.

Mr. Maurer highlighted how efforts to limit war should be guided by the Geneva Conventions, which reflect universal norms that have existed for thousands of years. He recognized that international legal and policy frameworks need to adapt to reflect the changing realities of conflict. He called for a new global social contract that builds consensus around humanitarian action, reaffirms shared values and creates the necessary space for the implementation of the core norms of IHL. Within that contract, Mr. Maurer advocated for a two-fold approach to protecting and assisting people in need: working to find pragmatic and holistic solutions on the ground and engaging state and non-state actors at the level of policy and law.

Finally, he called on participants to use the WHS as an opportunity to broaden the global network of those engaged in humanitarian action. He cautioned against privileging the role of domestic actors over international responders, calling for a truly collaborative environment based on shared values and principles, without prejudice.



Ms. Leena Al Hadid, Director of International Relations and Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, thanked participants for their engagement in the regional consultation. She acknowledged the important role played by the co-chairs of the Regional Steering Group: LAS, OIC and OCHA.

She commended participants for the recommendations they put forward to the global WHS process and expressed hope that they would make an important contribution to the summit. She encouraged all stakeholders to renew their commitment to humanitarian action to better meet the challenges in the MENA region. Ms. Al Hadid placed particular emphasis on forced displacement, which has caused wide-scale human suffering in the region, especially for children, women, the elderly and the disabled, and has placed a huge burden on those states that host

refugees. Overcoming these challenges requires increased support to alleviate human suffering and maximizing the response efforts of different stakeholders.

Finally, Ms. Al Hadid voiced the appreciation of the Government and people of Jordan for the opportunity to host the regional consultation and hoped that the participants had the opportunity to experience the country's culture and history.

CONCLUSION

The main findings and recommendations from the regional consultation pointed to an overall sense that global humanitarian efforts are failing to cope with the scale and nature of current humanitarian crises in the MENA region. There were calls to reform the humanitarian architecture and to ensure greater protection and assistance to people in need. Participants expressed hope and expectation that the WHS would be an important opportunity to put into effect the changes that are essential to reaffirming the humanitarian imperative of saving lives and alleviating suffering. Equally strong was the consistent reminder throughout the process that humanitarian aid cannot be a substitute for political action.

In order to benefit from the momentum and partnerships created during the regional consultation process and to initiate the implementation of recommendations emerging from it, the WHS Regional Steering Group for MENA encourages relevant stakeholders to champion the recommendations, turn them into specific actions and share lessons on their experience. The group will continue to function in order to support further consultations in the region and to promote the implementation of recommendations in the lead-up to the WHS global consultation in October 2015 and the summit in May 2016.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: REFERENCES TO BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Two key supporting documents were prepared to inform the regional consultation meeting and to capture the findings of the extensive stakeholder consultations that preceded the final meeting in Jordan. They can be accessed through the following links:

Initial scoping paper



https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_mena/scopingpaper

Stakeholder consultation report



https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_mena/stakeholderconsultation-report

ANNEX 2: CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) regional consultation for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was held at the Dead Sea, Jordan, from 3-5 March 2015. It was hosted by the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and co-chaired by the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

In the spirit of the summit's multi-stakeholder approach, the meeting brought together 180 participants from 17 countries¹ representing Member States of the United Nations, regional organizations, civil society, affected communities, national and international non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the private sector, academia and religious leaders, as well as observers from five countries that have hosted or will host World Humanitarian Summit consultations. The meeting was preceded by preparatory stakeholder consultations with 1,230 individuals representing their wider constituencies.²

The majority of participants at the regional consultation reaffirmed the sentiment of stakeholders consulted in the preparatory process, expressing outrage at the level of human suffering in the region. The current situation was deemed unacceptable and there were calls for global leaders to take necessary measures to reverse this tragic situation and address the root cause of people's suffering. **There are no humanitarian solutions to political problems.** This was a key message of the regional consultation with many highlighting the protracted plight of the Palestinian people as a central example, calling for an end to occupation and for the fulfillment of their inalienable right to self-determination.

The WHS regional consultation for the MENA region focused on six key issues that emerged from the preparatory stakeholder analysis. These were Protection of Civilians, Humanitarian Access, Protracted Crises and Displacement, Emergency Preparedness, Localizing Humanitarian Response and Humanitarian Financing. A number of other issues will be considered in the course of further stakeholder consultations in the region.

The main findings and recommendations were as follows:

1. Protection of Civilians

The increasing scale and severity of attacks against civilians in the region led to calls for greater respect of international laws that govern the protection of civilians. The primary responsibility of states in this regard was emphasized with strong calls for accountability and the implementation of these laws. These included the requirement to:

- Ratify international instruments pertaining to the protection of civilians, in particular the second Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and the 1951 Refugee Convention;
- Establish national committees on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), where these were not yet in place, to bring relevant national legislation into conformity with international law;
- Provide IHL training for armed and police forces, as well as other relevant officials, with the support of donors and participation of humanitarian actors where relevant;
- Monitor the application of IHL and hold perpetrators of violations accountable through the establishment of national or international mechanisms or to activate those that are already in place.

Participants urged **regional organizations**, such as the League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to **strengthen their role in the protection of civilians**. This could include the adoption of regional instruments that protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs), building on the experience from other regions; the establishment of mechanisms to monitor violations of IHL, civilian casualties and access issues; and fostering consensus among Member States on concrete measures to protect civilians in conflicts.

The **international donor community** was requested to ensure sufficient funding for protection activities and to support initiatives aimed at promoting respect for IHL and human rights throughout the region.

Parties to conflicts, including armed groups, were urged to meet their obligations in the respect of IHL and facilitate the work of humanitarian actors, including by ensuring access and lifting restrictions that preclude their work. This requires humanitarian actors to engage in dialogue with all parties to a conflict, including armed groups. In line with IHL, this engagement for legitimate humanitarian purposes should be encouraged and not criminalized.

Protection should be at the heart of humanitarian action with mechanisms for achieving this objective appropriate to each organization's mandate and strengths. Monitoring violations of IHL is required from the outset of a crisis. Addressing protection concerns should constitute an integral part of humanitarian needs assessments, including tackling the protection needs of specific groups, such as women, children, displaced persons, migrants and those with disabilities. It also requires effective coordination among different sectors. Humanitarian organizations need to enhance their capacities on protection through training and mentoring of their staff.

Participants recognized the **critical role played national authorities and civil society organizations**, including the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in protecting civilians, including through applying and promoting local customs and practices in protecting civilians and disseminating information on international law to IDPs and refugees, as well as to their host communities. The media is also a powerful tool to be harnessed to raise awareness about IHL violations and calling for its respect.

The protection of civilians was deemed a universal principle, with **frameworks and practices existing in religious and other traditions and norms** from the region. There were calls to explore the synergies between these and international legal protection frameworks with the aim of developing context-specific practices and interventions that can better protect civilians on the ground. The role of religious leaders in providing protection and facilitating assistance was emphasized.

2. Humanitarian Access

Whilst re-affirming the principle of state sovereignty, the lack of access to people in need was highlighted as a significant obstacle in the region. Governments and other **parties to conflicts, including armed groups, should facilitate unimpeded access** of humanitarian assistance and staff to affected people, which is critical to understanding the numbers of people affected and their needs.

Humanitarian access requires humanitarian organizations to negotiate with concerned parties with the objective of reaching affected people. In this regard, the **principles of humanitarian action were widely re-affirmed** and were deemed important in facilitating the ability of humanitarian organizations to operate in conflict areas.

There were repeated calls to **de-politicize humanitarian action**, and ensure assistance was provided in a transparent manner and on the basis of need alone. The UN Security Council was seen as a forum in which humanitarian issues are frequently politicized with the use of the veto highlighted in resolutions pertaining to humanitarian action.

While the importance of **countering terrorism** in the region was recognized, the negative impact of laws and related measures on humanitarian negotiation, financial transfers and access should be mitigated, with many humanitarian actors calling for greater clarity of the implications of these laws and for their legal protection to safeguard their ability to operate.

Attacks against humanitarian workers and property were condemned with more action demanded to protect those providing humanitarian assistance. The international community has to install a process or a mechanism by which it can hold states and non-state actors accountable and financially-liable if they deliberately cause unjustified economic or financial loss to the humanitarian sector. This, for example, should cover medical, educational and other facilities.

The importance of **close proximity of humanitarian organizations to the people they serve** was deemed essential for building trust and acceptance with these communities. International humanitarian organizations should ensure local partners are provided with access to adequate financial resources, assets and insurance schemes to ensure staff safety and security.

3. Protracted Crises and Displacement

Recognizing the needs of displaced people, including for durable solutions, and the burden placed on host governments and communities, there was a call for **increased burden sharing** of hosting refugees by the international community and the need to ensure a **holistic approach to the management of crises**, including planning for future displacement. Actors should address the needs of host communities in response planning and use humanitarian and development approaches, in line with national and local priorities. Development interventions should come at an early stage and include support to the local economy and making investments in basic services and infrastructure that benefit both the displaced and their hosts.

Participants called for the scaling up of efficient and coordinated **cash-based programming** to provide people with greater choice and for including **temporary employment opportunities** as part of response programming. These were deemed necessary to ensure service delivery that preserves the dignity of displaced people. When appropriate, priority should be given to voluntary return programs.

International finance institutions were encouraged to provide investments under favourable terms to help middle income countries rapidly shoulder the burden of refugees.

A **network of academic and training institutes** should be established and supported within the region to develop management and technical expertise in crisis management.

The **psychosocial impact of violent conflict** and protracted displacement was recognized and targeted support needed to be integrated in the response, in particular for women, the elderly and children.

4. Localizing Humanitarian Response

The importance of national and local authorities and organizations taking the lead in humanitarian response was widely affirmed, as was accountability to and participation of affected people. International humanitarian actors need to include **local capacity building measures** as an integral part of their programming, which will help facilitate a timely and planned exit.

Local organizations should receive a greater portion of humanitarian **funding and be able to access these directly**. This requires decreasing inefficiencies by removing the multiple levels of sub-contracting and intermediaries, and increasing the contribution of country-based pooled funds, such as Emergency Response Funds, to national and local actors.

Humanitarian **coordination mechanisms should be made more inclusive**, complementary and accessible to local organizations. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should be reviewed and adapted to better reflect the diversity of humanitarian actors and the challenges faced within specific regions, including through its possible decentralization. To encourage greater trust and collaboration between local and international organizations, the latter should demonstrate greater transparency in their operations and criteria for selecting partners.

5. Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness and **understanding of risk** should be prioritized in the region, taking into consideration vulnerabilities and specific contexts, including differences of urban and rural settings. Common, multi-hazard risk analysis should be encouraged, including through greater links with academia, research and development and the private sector to allow for more informed **early warning and early action**, both for natural and conflict related crises.

Participants called on national governments to **develop and implement national legislation on emergency preparedness**, including contingency plans and early warning systems, and identify the roles and responsibilities of government ministries, civil society, National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the private sector amongst others. Integrating emergency preparedness in education curricula at all educational levels was deemed important to instilling a culture of prevention and rapid response.

Governments should commit a certain percentage of their budgets to emergency preparedness, informed by the cost efficiency of disaster preparedness versus response. They should also endorse regional instruments and mechanisms on emergency preparedness, building on lessons learnt within and outside the region.

The capacity of civil society organizations should be strengthened to better prepare for emergencies. This includes supporting more **institutionalized forms of youth engagement**, whose role and contribution to humanitarian action, recovery and development was widely acknowledged and commended.

6. Humanitarian Financing

There were wide calls to address the **funding gap between increasing humanitarian needs and available resources**. Humanitarian organizations need to make concerted efforts to improve their efficiency, such as through greater use of cash-based programming and minimizing overhead costs. This would benefit from engagement with the private sector to leverage innovation, resourc-

es and expertise. Moreover, private sector engagement in humanitarian action was encouraged with tax breaks as possible incentives.

Following major pledging conferences or appeals for funding, **follow up mechanisms**, such as the top donors group for the Syria crisis, should be established to ensure pledges are fulfilled in a timely manner.

The **culture and traditions of Islamic giving** should be leveraged to support regional and local humanitarian organizations' work in the region, with several mechanisms suggested. This requires concerted dialogue with existing institutions and experts on the subject to draw up concrete proposals on how this could be achieved.

Understanding the extent of the funding gap requires a more comprehensive picture of humanitarian funding in the region. Thus, **national and regional mechanisms** should be established, with the aim of collecting information on funding by the diverse range of actors that work and operate in the region. The League of Arab States' resolution passed in March 2014 calling for the establishment of a coordination mechanism is one avenue for taking this forward.

Addressing the funding gap also requires more sustainable interventions that focus on building resilience and development objectives in addition to meeting people's immediate needs. This will necessitate more **predictable and longer-term humanitarian financing** as well as better leveraging of **development financing**. There were some calls for mandatory financial contributions for the most severe humanitarian crises.

Conclusions

The main findings and recommendations pointed to an overall sense that **global humanitarian efforts are failing to cope** in effectively addressing the scale and nature of current humanitarian crises. There were calls to **reform the current humanitarian architecture** and its ways of operating to ensure greater protection and assistance to people in need. Participants expressed hope and expectation that the WHS would be an important process to put these changes into effect, which are essential to reaffirming the humanitarian imperative of saving lives and alleviating human suffering. Equally important is the need to **ensure that humanitarian aid is not used as substitute for political action**.

The WHS MENA regional consultation brought together a unique network of humanitarian actors in the hope that it would set the foundations for broad partnerships that can take forward these recommendations.

The Co-Chairs' summary was endorsed by the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It is not a consensus document but rather captures the main findings and recommendations articulated by participants at the regional consultation. A more detailed report will follow and can be found on www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_mena.

The Co-Chairs encouraged all actors from the region to champion the recommendations, turn them into specific actions and share lessons on their experience.

ANNEX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE MENA REGIONAL CONSULTATION

MONDAY, 2 MARCH 2015

17:00- 21:00	Registration of participants at the Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea reception Participants will be given their badges and conference package upon registration.
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DAY 1 – TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2015

08:00-09:00	Registration of participants at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Center Participants will be given their badges and conference package upon registration.
OPENING PLENARY SESSION (PUBLIC SESSION)	
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome by the Master of Ceremonies (MC) Ms. Alia Al-Dalli , International Director Designate MENA region, SOS Villages International
09:15 – 10:30	High-level opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His Excellency Nasser Judeh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan • His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Badr Eddine El Allali, Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Social Affairs Sector, League of Arab States (LAS) • His Excellency Ambassador Hesham Yousef, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) • Ms. Valerie Amos, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
10:30 – 11:15	Group photo and coffee break
PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED SESSION)	
11:15 – 11:30	World Humanitarian Summit: Setting the stage Dr. Jemilah Mahmood , Chief of the World Humanitarian Summit secretariat
11:30 – 11:35	Video Animated video of the preparatory stakeholder consultation process in the MENA region
11:35 – 12:05	Presentation on the regional consultation preparatory process and the main findings Ms. Rema Jamous-Imseis , Head of OCHA Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa On behalf of the WHS Regional Steering Group, participants will be briefed on the preparatory process in the lead up to the regional consultation. They will also be informed of the main findings that emerged from the process and the rationale for the selection of breakout discussion session topics.
12:05 – 12:15	Briefing on breakout session methodology
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch

BREAKOUT GROUP SESSION 1 (CLOSED SESSION)	
13:30 – 16:30 Coffee will be served during the session	Breakout group discussion 8 discussion sessions in parallel on Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Financing
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee break
PLENARY SESSION (PUBLIC SESSION)	
17:00 – 17:45	High-level remarks Mr. Antonio Guterres , United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
17:45 onwards	Light dinner reception Light dinner reception and WHS photography exhibition “The Spirit of Humanity”

DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2015

PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED SESSION)	
09:00 – 10:00	Feedback from day 1 breakout group discussions Presentation of the outcomes and recommendations from working groups on Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Financing
10:00 – 13:00 Coffee will be served during the session	Breakout group discussions 8 discussion sessions in parallel on Protection of Civilians and Protracted Crises and Displacement
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
BREAKOUT GROUP SESSION 3 (CLOSED SESSION)	
14:00 – 17:00 Coffee will be served during the session	Breakout group discussions 8 discussion sessions in parallel on Localizing Humanitarian Response and Humanitarian Access
PANEL DISCUSSION (CLOSED SESSION)	
18:00 – 19:30	Panel discussion on forced displacement in the MENA region Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons • Mr. Muhannad Hadi, Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa of the World Food Program • Mr. Richard Wright, Director, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Moderated by: Ms. Alia Al-Dalli , International Director Designate MENA region, SOS Villages International

DAY 3 – THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2015	
	PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED SESSION)
09:30 – 11:00	Feedback from day 2 breakout discussions Presentation of the outcomes and recommendations from working groups on Protection of Civilians, Protracted Crises and Displacement, Localizing Humanitarian Response and Humanitarian Access
11:00 – 11:45	Coffee break
	PLENARY SESSION (CLOSED SESSION)
11:00-13:00	Presentation and discussion of the co-chairs’ summary LAS, OIC and OCHA will present the co-chairs’ summary of the regional consultation findings and recommendations for discussion
	CLOSING PLENARY SESSION (PUBLIC SESSION)
12:30 – 13:15	High-level remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Al Matouq, United Nations Secretary-General’s Humanitarian Envoy • Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross
13:15-13:25	Host government closing remarks Ms. Leena Al Hadid , Director, International Relations and Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
13:25 – 14:30	Lunch

ANNEX 4: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

GOVERNMENTS		
Country	Organization	Constituency
Algeria	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Egypt	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Germany	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	WHS consultation host
Iraq	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Jordan	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Kuwait	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Lebanon	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Libya	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Morocco	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York	Member State
Netherlands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	WHS partner
Oman	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Palestine	Ministry of Social Affairs Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development	Member State
Qatar	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
South Africa	Department of International Relations and Cooperation	WHS consultation host
Switzerland	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	WHS consultation host
Syria	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Member State
Tunisia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Social Affairs	Member State
Turkey	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı (AFAD)	Member State
United Arab Emirates	Ministry of International Cooperation and Development	Member State
Yemen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	Member State

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Constituency
African Union	Regional Organization
Gulf Cooperation Council	Regional Organization
League of Arab States	Regional Organization
Organization of Islamic Cooperation	Regional Organization
Nayef Arab University for Security Sciences	Regional Organization

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Country	Organization	Constituency
Bahrain	Bahrain Royal Charity	Civil society
Egypt	Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services Food Bank	Civil society
Iraq	Harikar Iraqi Al Amal NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq Women for Progress Center	Civil society
Jordan	Caritas Jordan Jordan Hashemite Charitable Organization Nour Al-Hussein Foundation	Civil society
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation	Civil society
Kuwait	International Islamic Charitable Organization	Civil society
Lebanon	Amel Association International Imam Sadr Foundation Lebanon Support Network Union of Relief and Development Association	Civil society
Libya	Al-Taher Azzawi Charitable Organization	Civil society
Morocco	La Fondation Mohammed V pour La Solidarité	Civil society
Oman	Oman Charitable Organization	Civil society
Palestine	Ma'an Development Center Palestinian Medical Relief Society Union of Agricultural Work Committees Women Affairs Centre	Civil society

Qatar	Qatar Charity Reach Out To Asia Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Services	Civil society
Syria	Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East Shafak	Civil society
Tunisia	Tunisia Charity	Civil society
United Arab Emirates	International Humanitarian City	Civil society
Yemen	The Humanitarian Forum Yemen	Civil society

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Constituency
Crisis Action	INGO
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	United Nations
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	United Nations
International Council of Voluntary Agencies	INGO
International Organization for Migration	Intergovernmental organization
Jordan INGO Forum	INGO forum
Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum	INGO forum
Médecins Sans Frontières	INGO
Mercy Corps Lebanon	INGO
Norwegian Refugee Council	INGO
Oxfam	INGO
Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis	United Nations
Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator in Jordan	United Nations
SOS Village International	INGO
Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs	United Nations

Syrian INGO Regional Forum	INGO forum
United Nations Children’s Fund	United Nations
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	United Nations
United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction	United Nations
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	United Nations
United Nations Population Fund	United Nations
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	United Nations
United Nations Secretary General’s Humanitarian Envoy	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations
World Food Programme	United Nations
World Health Organization	United Nations
Yemen INGO Forum	INGO

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Country	Organization	Constituency
Egypt	Egyptian Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Iraq	Iraqi Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Jordan	Jordanian National Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Saudi Red Crescent Authority	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Kuwait	Kuwait Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Lebanon	Lebanese Red Cross	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Libya	Libyan Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Palestine	Palestine Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Qatar	Qatar Red Crescent Society	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Tunisia	Tunisian Red Crescent	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Regional	International Committee of the Red Cross	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
Regional	International Federation of the Red Cross	Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Country	Organization	Constituency
Egypt	American University of Cairo	Academia
	International Federation of Medical Students' Associations	Youth
Jordan	Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization	Private sector
	Arab Evangelical Episcopal Church	Religious entities
	Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center	Religious entities
Lebanon	American University of Beirut	Academia
Morocco	World Scouts	Youth
Palestine	Sharek Youth Forum	Youth
Qatar	Brookings Institute Doha	Academia
	ALJazeera Centre for Studies	Academia
Regional	Harvard Law School	Academia
	Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection	Academia
	West Asia - North Africa Institute	Academia
	Islamic Development Bank	Financial institutions
	Y-Peer	Youth
United Arab Emirates	Linklaters	Private sector

Yemen	Youth Leadership Development Foundation	Youth
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AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Country	Constituency
Iraq	Affected community
Jordan	Affected community
Palestine	Affected community
Syria	Affected community
Yemen	Affected community

