

Statement on behalf of the European Union and Member States

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

As the Summit approaches, the world is experiencing unprecedented human suffering caused by conflicts, natural disasters, and social and economic fragility. It is clear that humanitarians cannot, and should not, be the only ones responsible for dealing with the current multitude of challenges. We also need the genuine involvement of political, development and environmental actors to prevent and end human suffering. Thus, we call for a truly global partnership among all of us, based on our common values of humanity, dignity and solidarity. The affected people must be at the heart of this partnership. People affected by crisis should have a clear voice at all stages of response – from defining what is needed to the assessment of the quality of response

Respect for humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law are a prerequisite for improved humanitarian action, which is expected from the Summit. Today, 80% of humanitarian work takes place in conflicts and the number of deliberate attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers, and health care personnel is increasing. Therefore, the Summit must call on governments to ensure safe access to all affected people, on donors to de-link humanitarian aid from political agendas, and on implementing organisations to be present as close as possible to all those in need, while bearing in mind the security conditions. Protection must be at the centre of humanitarian response. In particular, the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, must be protected from the start.

The Summit is also an opportunity to make humanitarian action more effective. The humanitarian system has never reached so many people in so many places. But innovative changes are needed to meet current dire challenges. To be effective, we must know what the complete picture of humanitarian needs is, what funding possibilities exist, what results we deliver. To achieve that, we must coordinate, not compete. We must better capitalise on the capacities of the various actors, from the local to the international level. We must invest in risk reduction, early warning, preparedness and resilience building. We need smarter finance that is sufficient and efficient, by using the right mix of funding instruments from a wide range of sources in the most cost-effective way. In some contexts, multi-purpose cash-based assistance can be significantly more efficient and effective than in-kind aid. We need a new business model for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors from the very beginning of a crisis, especially in protracted ones. And we must fully implement the IASC Transformative Agenda.

The World Humanitarian Summit should build on the progress achieved in related 2015 processes, including on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Climate Change Conference. It should also remain a multi-stakeholder process given the diversity of actors contributing to humanitarian efforts.

The European Union and its Member States will remain engaged in the preparations of the Summit and will remain committed to make it a success. It is not a choice but a human imperative.

Thank you.