



30<sup>th</sup> July 2015

## Statement of French NGOs to the World Humanitarian Summit

This statement is the result of consultations among humanitarian NGOs based in France. It supplements the joint statement on humanitarian principles<sup>1</sup> and focuses on issues humanitarian actors regularly confront in complex crises where political stakes are high, such as armed conflicts or other forms of violence. The following statement aims to offer propositions in advance of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) to lead to lasting improvements in the humanitarian system.

Humanitarian NGOs are operating today in an unprecedented number of protracted, acute and complex crises where humanitarian principles are often challenged and where principled humanitarian action, free from the influence of political or military agendas, is difficult to deliver. We believe that the current “one size fits all” approach to complex crises fails too often to uphold humanitarian principles, to meet the needs of affected people and make humanitarian actors sufficiently accountable to the populations. While available funding has increased, humanitarian needs have far outpaced available resources, leaving huge gaps in the humanitarian response. Meanwhile, many small-scale crises--unable to generate media or political attention--remain underfunded and overlooked by States and donors.

Considering the stated aim of the World Humanitarian Summit of transforming the humanitarian system, we request that the outcome of the WHS is firmly grounded on humanitarian principles and the preeminence of principled humanitarian action.

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<sup>1</sup> See statement online: [http://www.actioncontrelafaim.org/sites/default/files/articles/fichier/joint-statement\\_humanitarian\\_principles-12th\\_may-.pdf](http://www.actioncontrelafaim.org/sites/default/files/articles/fichier/joint-statement_humanitarian_principles-12th_may-.pdf)

## **I. For States to take their responsibility in maintaining a principled response in complex crises**

We recognize that States bear the primary responsibility to respond to the needs of their populations. However, we witness that humanitarian action in complex crises, despite clear and widely accepted provisions regarding the humanitarian imperative and access to aid by populations in distress, is increasingly challenged by some States or *de facto* authorities who restrain or impede access to humanitarian aid for affected populations.

- Signatories call on the WHS to promote neutrality in all aspects of humanitarian operations. We believe that in complex crises, such as armed conflicts or situations of acute civil unrest, States directly involved in the conflict should systematically and voluntarily handover coordination of the response to actors or mechanisms that are principled and independent.
- We support current initiatives to enhance UN Security Council effectiveness in cases of mass atrocities and call for a new rule whereby 'Permanent 5' States relinquish their veto right on issues related to humanitarian response and access in complex crises.

## **II. Principled funding for independent humanitarian action**

Money oils the wheels of war. Specifically in complex crises, humanitarian aid can be used by various actors to benefit their political or military agendas, putting aid actors at risk of being perceived as biased or of supporting various political agendas.

Recommendations from the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative should now be fully implemented by donors to provide more predictable, flexible and effective funds for the response to complex crises.

Signatories call on the WHS to:

- Ensure that, in order to maintain independence and impartiality of agencies delivering aid on the ground, parties to the conflict will not be in a position to fund entirely or too significantly the humanitarian appeals related to the crisis they are directly taking part to, and instead direct their financial contributions towards the CERF or other non-dedicated and rapidly available funds to systematically blend such funds with other sources of funding. The contribution of donors that are at the same time parties to a conflict is respected, but should not hinder humanitarian principles and should not in any way open the door to bilateral or specific conditions that would link humanitarian support with a military strategy.
- Promote and discuss the development of an independent pool fund separated from the UN, easily accessible by NGOs and managed by a consortium of them.
- In situations of protracted fragile crises, commit to longer term predictable funding, in order to ensure that adequate humanitarian aid can be delivered without interruption.

- Ensure a simplification of existing overly-complicated humanitarian funding mechanisms and alignment and harmonisation of donors' processes to help all actors, in particular national NGOs, access funds.
- Increase the share of direct funding from institutional donors to national civil society organizations, by providing training to these organizations for them to meet donors' requirements and allowing the inclusion of a significant percentage of overheads to contribute to the financing of their structure.

### **III. An independent coordination for a more effective and principled action**

Complex crises result in a myriad of needs and vulnerabilities, demanding effective coordination to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable people.

Unfortunately, specific mandates of some UN agencies may hinder or complicate the coordination of aid, slowing down humanitarian response instead of facilitating it. We reaffirm that having a reinforced coordinating body effectively detached from political and military bodies is essential to maintain principled humanitarian action.

Signatories call on the WHS to:

- Within the framework of a revision of mandates of UN emergency agencies, propose that OCHA, as the emergency response coordinating body, be given full independence by separating it from other UN bodies in complex crises and be granted full authority in coordinating all complex crises, including refugee crises.

### **IV. For a localised humanitarian system capable of adapting to protracted emergencies in complex crises**

Responding to protracted, chronic crises has too often implied that humanitarian aid expands until humanitarians become the main service providers. This approach does not reduce vulnerability or develop local capacity; nor does it meet the long-term needs or aspirations of the populations. The affected populations, women, children, elderly and people with disabilities as well as hard-to-reach people, are often the most vulnerable of all and the global humanitarian system has yet to prioritise finding appropriate and inclusive ways to ensure that they receive the aid they need—as humanitarian principles demand.

We consider that local and regional NGOs are key players which can guarantee long term presence and more effectively bridge emergency and development responses. Partnership and complementarities with international actors should be enhanced.

Signatories call on the WHS to:

- Improve capacity building of local organisations involved in humanitarian response, in particular by strengthening their understanding and adherence to the humanitarian principles, as an essential step in ensuring that a more decentralised and flexible humanitarian response can be achieved. This should be a priority for all humanitarian actors, donors, UN agencies and experienced organizations.

## Signatories

Action Contre La Faim – France

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Coordination SUD

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Coordination SUD:

Coordination SUD is the French national platform of international solidarity NGOs, registered as a non-profit association under the French law 1901. Founded in 1994, it brings together more than 160 NGOs active in the fields of humanitarian aid, development assistance, environmental protection, the defense of disadvantaged people's human rights and international solidarity education and advocacy. Coordination SUD fulfills a dual mission of supporting the professionalization of French NGOs and representing their positions to public and private institutions in France, Europe and around the world. It takes part in activities at the European level with Concord, the European NGO confederation for relief and development, and the International Forum of Platforms, which brings together more than 1800 NGOs.