



IFRC | World Humanitarian Summit: The test is what will follow

24 May 2016

The World Humanitarian Summit draws to a close with the news of bombings that have claimed well over 100 lives in Syria, and against the backdrop of the continued suffering of tens of millions of people around the world, including those affected by El Niño influenced drought in southern and eastern Africa.

According to the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Elhadj As Sy, these events are a reminder of the ever growing complexity of humanitarian action and vulnerability, and of the urgent need for new humanitarian solutions, and reinforced commitment to humanitarian norms.

“We have engaged in the World Humanitarian Summit as a strong advocate on behalf of local communities and affected people. We must recognize, with humility, that our current responses do not match the scale and magnitude of the challenges we face. We are committed to do more and better.

“Some of the outcomes of the Summit, including the Grand Bargain, the increased recognition given to local action and local actors, and the emphasis placed on putting communities at the centre of our work, should help strengthen our response,” said Mr Sy. “Ultimately, the success of this Summit is determined by what happens next; by our ability to translate these ideas and momentum into actions that improves the lives of the world’s most vulnerable.

“We are hopeful that the World Humanitarian Summit will be followed by concrete actions.”

The Summit highlighted major gaps in the way the international community approaches crises. It acknowledged the limitations of short-term relief that does not reduce future need. The IFRC believes that the social and economic case for a resilience approach is clear. Building stronger, more resilient communities means saving lives today, protecting livelihoods tomorrow, and providing economic and social stability in the years to come.

The Summit also affirmed that the humanitarian community needs to improve how it works with national and local partners. “We can no longer afford to ignore the heroes at home – volunteers and local humanitarian actors, like National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – those who are always there on the side of communities to accompany them to respond to their needs,” said Mr Sy.

Today, less than one per cent of international humanitarian funding goes directly to local humanitarian actors. The IFRC believes that this imbalance can be fixed without losing sight of the important role of international humanitarian action. To this end, the IFRC welcomes the Grand Bargain and the recognition it gives to local humanitarian actors, and the potential improvements it heralds for humanitarian financing. The IFRC, its 190 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their 17 million volunteers are present in virtually every community around the world and are well positioned to help support local action that delivers the right humanitarian outcomes.

The IFRC joined its voice to calls on states to reaffirm their commitment to humanitarian principles, to take every step possible to end violations of International Humanitarian Law in conflicts around the world, to recognize vulnerable migrants as humans in need, and to ensure that no one is left behind by humanitarian action, whether it is due to their gender, disability, age or national origin.

The IFRC and major partners are moving forward building a global coalition, with the goal of supporting one billion people to take action to strengthen their resilience by 2025. This “One Billion Coalition for Resilience” brings together partners from all sectors, and from local to global, to motivate, inform, mobilize and support communities to take action, to be safer and better able to withstand shocks.

The IFRC will continue to work with partners to support a strong and diverse humanitarian ecosystem where different actors and partners are working together to address humanitarian challenges.

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