



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP TO PREVENT AND END CONFLICTS

HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS' ROUNDTABLE

Core Responsibility One of the Agenda for Humanity

“An end to human suffering requires political solutions, unity of purpose, sustained leadership and investment in inclusive and peaceful societies.”

Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit

BACKGROUND

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit will take place from 23 to 24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. Three years of extensive consultations reaching more than 23,000 people in 153 countries clearly called for change in how the international community addresses humanitarian need and suffering and called for a renewed commitment to humanity. Istanbul is the moment to demonstrate global unity and solidarity to prevent and end suffering, and to take all steps necessary to make humanity the driver of decision-making and collective action.

In his report for the World Humanitarian Summit, the United Nations Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other stakeholders to accept and act upon five core responsibilities that he believes are critical to delivering better for humanity. His Agenda for Humanity outlines the key actions and strategic shifts necessary to deliver on these responsibilities. The Secretary-General urges global leaders at the Summit to commit to taking the Agenda forward.



This should be a framework for action, change and mutual accountability to measure progress over the next three years and beyond.

The High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on "Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflict" is an early opportunity to commit to taking forward Core Responsibility One of the Agenda for Humanity.

CONTEXT

We are seeing a significant global increase in protracted and intractable conflicts, causing ever larger and more profound humanitarian crises, prolonged human suffering, political turmoil, huge economic and financial costs and large-scale displacement and refugee flows. The international community is in a state of constant crisis management. Crisis is no longer the exception but seemingly the norm, and beyond the capacity of a single actor to solve.

After a decline in the late 1990s and early 2000s, major wars increased from four in 2007 to eleven in 2014. The economic and financial cost of conflict and violence in 2014 has been estimated by some to be US\$14.3 trillion, or 13.4 per cent of the global economy.

A third of today's civil wars see the involvement of external actors supporting one or more parties to a conflict. This "internationalization" makes civil wars more deadly and prolonged. Between 2012 and 2014, non-United Nations peacekeeping forces increased by 60 per cent. Almost two-thirds of UN peacekeepers and almost 90 per cent of personnel in United Nations Special Political Missions are working in or on countries experiencing high-intensity conflict. Over 80 per cent of humanitarian funding requested by the United Nations goes towards meeting needs in conflict settings.

While humanitarian assistance may ameliorate suffering and peacekeepers may stabilize situations, they cannot create lasting peace and prosperity. Preventing and ending conflict and building peace is recognized in the UN Charter as Member States' first and foremost responsibility to humanity. It is the only solution to reduce human suffering and man-made humanitarian crises, to eradicate the fertile ground for transnational crime and to ensure sustainable development for all.

Primary responsibility for conflict prevention and resolution lies with Member States and the United Nations Security Council. The World Humanitarian Summit is the moment for us to act, to demonstrate coherence and decisive political leadership, to act early and commit to invest in risk analysis, to create political unity to prevent and not just manage crisis and to make successful conflict prevention visible.

This High-Level Leaders' Roundtable will bring together global leaders to respond to the United Nations Secretary-General's call to demonstrate decisive political and sustained leadership to prevent and end conflicts, and secure concrete commitments to achieve the Agenda for Humanity and its Core Responsibility One.

OBJECTIVE

Recognizing that ending human suffering requires political solutions - strengthened global leadership in preventing and ending conflicts and increased investments in peaceful societies - world leaders must take up the challenge of recommitting to their responsibility to make early warning, prevention, mediation and conflict resolution a priority.



The objective of the High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on "Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflict" is to deliver concrete policy and operational commitments aimed at addressing specific actions outlined in Core Responsibility One in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity.

In particular and in line with the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity, the roundtable will seek concrete commitments from leaders on questions such as:

- *How can the international community make early warning, prevention, mediation and conflict resolution a greater priority?*
- *How can we ensure a shift from perpetual crisis management during an acute phase of a conflict towards effectively and proactively managing prevention and early action?*
- *Given the increase of simultaneously occurring crises, how can the international community increase its crisis capacity across the spectrum of conflicts and crises?*

In answering these questions, leaders at the roundtable are expected to offer commitments which operationalize the Agenda for Humanity and ensure a shift from perpetual crisis management during an acute phase of a conflict, towards effective and proactive conflict prevention, management and early action and address how to increase capacities for conflict prevention and mediation.

We must use the High-Level Leaders' Roundtable at the Summit to gain political momentum and commitment from leaders on promoting conflict prevention and mediation for societies worldwide. We want to learn from leaders who have been successfully involved in conflict prevention and mediation what it takes to prevent and mediate conflicts. This event will provide a platform to make success visible, showcase best practices and identify the key principles and variables for successful conflict prevention, mediation and resolution.

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE*

The High-Level Leaders' Roundtable will be convened and moderated by a Chair and supported by a Rapporteur. The roundtable will result in a Roundtable Summary which will include the individual and collective commitments made by participants and a way forward. The Roundtable Summary will contribute to the Chair's Summary of the World Humanitarian Summit.

This High-Level Leaders' Roundtable will last for two hours, with interventions from between 35 and 50 global leaders. Each leader may be accompanied by two advisors. Leaders will speak from assigned seats (roundtable format) and their interventions should not exceed three minutes. The roundtable will be open to media and be broadcast and webcast live. The time and location for this session will be made known shortly.

*The format and structure of the roundtable are subject to modification.



REGISTRATION AND ROUNDTABLE PREPARATIONS

The objective of this roundtable will be for Member States and other stakeholders to announce commitments to make tangible progress against the recommendations under Core Responsibility One for the Agenda for Humanity. Please register interest in, and the level of participation, for this roundtable at leadersroundtables@whsummit.org by March 11, 2016.

The WHS secretariat will contact interested Member States and other stakeholders over the next two months to work together to prepare each High-Level Leaders' Roundtable, including by identifying and securing concrete commitments aimed at making progress against each of the five Core Responsibilities of the Agenda for Humanity. This interaction will build upon and expand existing partnerships with Member States and stakeholders.