



Summary note | Panel discussion organised by the World Bank and the Norwegian Refugee Council, Geneva, 7 March 2018

BEYOND THE GRAND BARGAIN

On 7 March 2018, the World Bank and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) organised a panel discussion “Beyond the Grand Bargain, two years on – taking stock of the recommendations of the UN High Level Panel’s Report on Humanitarian Financing”. The discussion featured Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, the CEO of the World Bank, Mr. Thomas Zahnneisen, Director for Humanitarian Assistance, German Federal Foreign Office, H.E. Mrs. Suraya Dalil, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Hautle, Executive Director and Network Representative, Global Compact Network, Switzerland, and Mr. Jan Egeland, the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva, provided welcoming remarks, whereas the discussion was moderated by Ms. Lisbeth Pilegaard, former senior adviser to the UN High Level Panel. The event gathered more than 280 guests, including ambassadors, senior representatives of member states, UN agencies and NGOs.

This exercise in stocktaking provided the opportunity to calibrate attention to the progress on the first two recommendations of the 2016 report “[Too important to fail](#)”, published by the UN High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. The High Level Panel was appointed by the former UN Secretary-General to define what can be done to address the funding gap in the humanitarian sector. The first recommendation focused on shrinking the needs and addressing the root causes of humanitarian crises, the second on deepening and broadening the resource base for humanitarian action, and the third one on the Grand Bargain for efficiency.

There has been momentous progress on the Grand Bargain over the past two years. While efforts to secure efficiency in the system must continue, stakeholders need to not lose sight of the other two recommendations.



PANELLIST REFLECTIONS:

I. Needs have not been shrinking

The panellists agreed that the international community is failing to exert proportional political efforts to shrink humanitarian needs and that more energy, political will and collective action is required to seek political solutions to respond to and prevent conflicts. Too often we are actually producing the needs, as Jan Egeland noted: *“Yemen is the biggest example, a man-made blockade and man-made war, forcing an additional ten million people unable to provide for themselves or their families.”* Ms. Kristalina Georgieva added, *“if we add up the number of people around the world living in situations of humanitarian need, they would constitute the tenth largest population in the world. At the time of our report, 2015, it was the 11th largest population; this means the number is increasing. This is happening because of our inability to deal with conflicts. Let me be clear, this is our political failure.”*

To truly shrink the needs, we need a global political leadership, according to H.E. Ambassador Suraya Dalil. *“We need a genuine commitment from global leaders. A long-term and sincere commitment.”*

Whilst recognising the challenges, the panellists also highlighted some initiatives already paving the way. As Mr. Thomas Zahneisen noted, *“Germany has focused its efforts on preventative approaches,*

especially on how to deal with natural disasters, as the impact of climate change is increasing the demand for humanitarian assistance funding.” One such example is Germany’s investment in innovative approaches for Forecast-based Financing (FbF). This initiative, in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the World Food Programme (WFP), aims to anticipate, prevent (if possible) and reduce potential humanitarian needs resulting from extreme weather disaster, such as typhoons, hurricanes, and tsunamis.

Another welcomed project comes from the World Bank, which has doubled funding for countries in situations of fragility through the “IDA facility”. This fund, which is open to partnership with both humanitarian and development communities, focuses on supporting activities that pave the way toward equality, economic growth, job creation, higher incomes, and better living conditions. *“Together we can make sure that our collective action has greater impact,”* Ms. Georgieva added.

Speaking from the floor, Mr. John Ging, Director of the Operational Division, OCHA, highlighted areas where improvement has been realised through strengthened data collection planning for conflicts or disasters through better evidence-based data to make the humanitarian case. He highlighted the urgency to mobilise the political community to prevent conflict and to respond appropriately to existing ones.

II. Innovative approaches for deepening and broadening the resource base

Panellists indicated a certain level of optimism with respect to progress seen on the recommendation to deepen and broaden resources. They presented some examples of innovative approaches by humanitarian actors to engage more with business and development sectors for creative partnerships. *“The most important progress is the fact that the international financial institutions and development actors now want to work with the humanitarian sector,”* noted Egeland. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the IFRC both referred to innovative fundraising and the importance of strengthened responses of national actors. Ms. Androulla Kaminara, DG ECHO, acknowledged the progress made in this area through instruments designed within the Grand Bargain, and emphasised the importance of linking the humanitarian and development sector.



The World Bank shared the positive illustration of their programmes working with insurance companies to design a new instrument for pandemic prevention allowing for States to pre-empt the effect of disasters. The collaboration between Norwegian Refugee Council and the Malaysian Maybank has the potential to tap into Islamic Social Financing.

Mr. Antonio Hautle, speaking for a network of Swiss-based companies, called humanitarian actors to “make the first step” in exploring stronger connection between the private sector and themselves. “We need to get small and middle sized companies on the agenda; convince them to engage – that would be the catalyst for change. Tell them – you’re responsible for your business locally, but you are also responsible globally.”

THE WAY FORWARD



Wrapping up the event, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva concluded by acknowledging “we are now recognising our collective responsibility to make the best use of scarce resources and recognising our collective duty to humanity. I cannot think of a better investment than building the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. For global stability and security, we need to make every effort possible to be more effective and to reach more people in vulnerable situations through no fault of their own.” Nathalie Kröner, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Netherlands ended her intervention by stating, “Reaching out and working together is key to overcome the divide between humanitarian and development, and public and private.”

Furthermore, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva emphasised that all actors have their comparative strengths which should be applied in working together, and in bringing the resources where they matter.

Speaking from the floor, the UK representative welcomed the initiative and requested the attendees to reconvene in six to twelve months’ time. **The World Bank and NRC will be reaching out to other stakeholders as they develop a collaborative review of initiatives underway at national, regional and global levels.**

The meeting was a good opportunity for stakeholders to come together and calibrate attention to the progress on the first two recommendations of the High Level Panel’s report. Now the pledges at the meeting must amount to all actors coming together in mapping and acknowledging the initiatives underway to ensure the implementation of the report’s recommendations.

For further information, please contact us at nrcgeneva.policy@nrc.no. Organisations, interested to take part in the follow-up process of mapping initiatives stemming from the first two recommendations of the High-Level Panel report, please contact [Cecilia Roselli](mailto:cecilia.roselli@nrc.no) (cecilia.roselli@nrc.no), the Head of Partnership and Policy unit in NRC Geneva.