

Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos

**Closing Remarks at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Regional Consultation
for North and Southeast Asia**

Tokyo, Japan: 24 July 2014

Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I first of all want to say a huge thank you because you all worked very hard. I've just caught the tail end of some of it when I was talking to you at the reception last night. And I know that some controversial issues were raised and handled in a sensitive way. So my thanks to the representatives of national governments, regional organizations, humanitarian and development partners, affected communities, civil society organizations and the private sector.

I think what the past two days have confirmed that North and Southeast Asia continues to provide leadership in grappling with and finding solutions to current and future humanitarian challenges, challenges that we face as a global community.

I would highlight your affirmation that humanitarian action needs to move away from notions of charity and goodwill for victims and towards a greater sense of investment and empowering people to live in dignity.

In my four years as the Emergency Relief Coordinator, I have consistently witnessed and heard first hand from people in affected communities, governments, humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders that the current way of we prepare for and respond to humanitarian needs and challenges is just not good enough.

Yesterday I challenged you in this room to be bold, provocative and creative in identifying new ways of working and in finding solutions that meet the basic needs of people and provide them with the dignity to which they are entitled.

The discussions here have been grounded in meeting this challenge, addressing the real issues and avoiding the political pitfalls that can so easily derail our discussion. This is thanks to you all of you who worked really hard and came up with a range of recommendations.

Let me highlight a few:

- Governments must lead overall coordination, ensuring that the structure is fully inclusive of all actors, supported by legal frameworks with accountability mechanisms.

- International and legal frameworks that are relevant to both conflict and disaster should be translated into national legislation.
- Human dignity should be considered as a cross-cutting issue and mainstreamed when developing legal frameworks, humanitarian standards and practices.
- Those gathered for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit should consider accountability as a humanitarian principle.
 - I really like that. Can you imagine trying to get them to be accountable? That would be fantastic.
- In the same way that donors demand accountability of humanitarian actors in their programming, an open and transparent accountability framework should be put into place which measures donor performance against the GHD principles.
- Specific and measurable indicators should be included in the SDGs to reduce the need for humanitarian response and assistance resulting from natural disasters.
- There should be investment in scientific partnerships and analysis of economic impact to build a case for greater investment in DRR.
 - I've been having a lot of meetings with our Japanese colleagues on this and the Sendai conference next year.
- Joint risk analysis, planning, financing and advocacy by humanitarian, development and climate change actors is needed to break down the artificial silos we have created.
- A regional framework, ethical guidelines and standards on innovation should be developed.
- Specific arrangements between public and private sector actors are required as part of preparedness efforts for disasters.
- Regional guidelines on civil-military coordination in conflict settings should be developed, building on international practice.
- The development of regional conventions for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons and migrants should be proposed for inclusion in the Secretary-General's report to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

The results of this consultation will be broadcast, and carried to the other regions with the next consultation in this process. I also hope to see some of you at the global consultation in Geneva in October next year and at the summit itself in Istanbul in 2016. Cross-fertilization and sharing best practices are at the heart of this process. I am also pleased that our partners from other regions joined this consultation to share their experiences and capture best practices to inform future consultations.

Humanitarian action by definition is done in difficult circumstances. It is never easy. But this process is aimed at making it function as well as it possibly can. Together, we must show the political will and professional excellence to overcome the political, institutional and behavioural obstacles to our work.

Thank you for coming together to demonstrate that political will and professional excellence.

A big thank you to our hosts, the Governments of Japan and Indonesia. A big thank you to the members of the Regional Steering Group, who have prepared this event. And to all of you who have dedicated the time and energy to this consultation, not just over the past two days but in the preparatory phase as well.

Most of all, I want us to remember the people who are caught up in crisis, who show such strength, courage and determination in surviving and recovering. This process must deliver for them.

It is my hope that the results from yesterday and today, and those to come in the summit preparation process, will support and empower people affected by crises around the world. And, I must add, I am delighted to hear that the Regional Steering Group has committed to start implementing the regional recommendations that you have agreed between now and the Istanbul summit. The steering group in West and Central Africa did exactly the same thing. I look forward to seeing progress in this regard, and being in a position to highlight, once again, the great example set by this region on the global stage.

Thank you.