We’re here today to talk about a system which is not broken – but it is broke.

Humanitarian appeals have grown by more than 600 per cent in the past decade. The global humanitarian appeal now stands at nearly $20 billion. Humanitarian aid was originally supposed to be a temporary measure – a first aid box. But today, we find we are giving first aid for years, while the underlying causes of the crisis go untreated.

Most humanitarian funding this year will go to just five protracted emergencies -- in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nearly 90 per cent of humanitarian funding from OECD Member States goes to countries in long-term crisis. In some cases, humanitarian organizations have become the default providers of essential services: clean water and sanitation; healthcare; education. This fosters dependency and crowds out funding from development partners and national governments.

If we want to deliver on the expectations raised by the post-2015 agendas, we know the current system will have to change.

The Secretary-General set up the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing in an effort to find some solutions. The panel’s work will be linked with other processes that are already underway, including the Climate Change Conference in Paris; the reviews of the UN’s peacekeeping architecture and of Women, Peace and Security; the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent; and the High Level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises.

Risk management is the unifying principle that runs through all these processes. Success will depend on making the right investments to mitigate risks and prepare for crises.

Humanitarian crises are the most extreme conditions that people face. If we get humanitarian risk management right, the benefits will flow to other areas -- including climate change mitigation and efforts to spur development.
I hope and expect the high-Level Panel will make bold and visionary recommendations when it reports later this year.

The panel also has the political clout to boost existing commitments as we prepare for the World Humanitarian Summit on 23 and 24 May 2016 in Istanbul.

On the humanitarian side, we are already committed to adapting our annual appeal model towards longer-term, more flexible investments in risk insurance, loans and budget support.

We are also committed to better targeting and planning. We are determined that aid should go where it’s most needed – even where infrastructure is challenging and supply routes are poor.

And we must overcome the long-standing reluctance to fund small, local groups because of perceived problems of tracking and accountability. Local groups, including and especially women’s organizations, are key to building resilience, and are the best way to make a lasting impact on the communities we serve.

I wish you all the best in your deliberations and I look forward to our discussion today.

Thank you.