

HUMANITARIAN DATA CENTRE IN THE NETHERLANDS WILL INCREASE DATA USE AND IMPACT IN HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

(Istanbul, 23 May 2016): The use of data will be a key determinant of humanitarian effectiveness in the 21st century. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is therefore establishing a global humanitarian data centre in the Netherlands, to be operational from early 2017. The initiative is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

“Accurate and timely data is critical to understanding and meeting the needs of affected people,” said Stephen O’Brien, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “OCHA has an important and unique role to play in bringing together data from our partners to create a common understanding and inform decision making at all levels. The centre will help us work together in new ways to find solutions to the challenges of using data effectively and responsibly in crisis settings.”

The OCHA-led centre will be part of an Innovation Hub being established by the city of The Hague that will bring together the UN, NGOs, the private sector and academia in a collaborative environment. The centre will provide support in three areas: increasing the reach and impact of OCHA and its partners through the provision of data services such as common standards, open platforms and interactive data visualizations; creating a trusted environment for data sharing across the sector by promoting good practices in data policy; and increasing the data literacy of humanitarians.

Dutch Minister Lillianne Ploumen (Foreign Trade and Development) welcomed the initiative and underlined the importance of OCHA’s efforts to improve the use of data in the humanitarian sector: “The data revolution can and must play a key role to help people in need better and faster. To achieve this, we need the best tools available to process and visualize data. Another essential element is close cooperation by all relevant stakeholders. In the Netherlands we are already working along these lines with initiatives like the Dutch Coalition for Humanitarian Innovation.”

The centre was announced during a side event on ‘The Future of Humanitarian Data’ at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. It is a concrete contribution toward one of the core commitments in the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Humanity – changing the way we work to end need.

A film introducing the importance of data in humanitarian work can be viewed here: [‘Making the Invisible Visible: A short film about humanitarian data’](#). The film was released at the Summit.

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