

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

19 August 2016

A record 130 million people are dependent on humanitarian assistance to survive. Grouped together, these people in need would comprise the tenth most populous nation on Earth.

These figures are truly staggering, yet they tell only a fraction of the story. Hidden behind the statistics are individuals, families and communities whose lives have been devastated. People no different to you and me: children, women and men who face impossible choices every day. They are parents who must choose between buying food or medicine for their children; children who must choose between school or working to support their families; families who must risk bombing at home or a perilous escape by sea.

The solutions to the crises that have plunged these people into such desperate hardship are neither simple nor quick. But there are things we can all do – today, and every day. We can show compassion, we can raise our voices against injustice, and we can work for change.

World Humanitarian Day is an annual reminder of the need to act to alleviate the suffering. It is also an occasion to honour the humanitarian workers and volunteers toiling on the frontlines of crises. I pay tribute to these dedicated women and men who brave danger to help others at far greater risk.

Today, I urge everyone to sign on to the United Nations “World You’d Rather” campaign. As well as raising awareness and building empathy, the campaign has a concrete goal: to raise money for the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund and to enrol the support of individuals everywhere as Messengers of Humanity. We need everybody to demand that their societies and governments put humanity first.

Earlier this year, 9,000 participants gathered in Istanbul for the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit. World leaders committed to transform the lives of people living in conflict, disaster and acute vulnerability. They rallied behind the Agenda for Humanity and its pledge to leave no one behind.

This promise is also at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals. With their focus on human rights, resilience and poverty eradication, these 17 global goals offer a 15-year plan to reduce needs and vulnerability and promote a world of peace, dignity and opportunity for all. To succeed on this collective journey, we need everyone to play their part. Each one of us can make a difference. On this World Humanitarian Day, let us unite in the name of humanity and show that we cannot and will not leave any one behind.