



Reaffirming Global Solidarity, Restoring Humanity



With global stability threatened by the steady increase in the number of conflicts and with natural disasters becoming more frequent and more severe, we recognise and applaud the generosity of all those who give their support to the 125 million people who desperately require humanitarian assistance.

We recognize that three-fourths of the humanitarian needs today result from war, all of which are human caused and all of which are susceptible to human solutions. The greatest humanitarian solution on the planet is the end of today's wars and the prevention of future conflicts. Wars result from many causes: injustice, deprivation, greed and the unbridled pursuit of gain, the pathological pursuit of power, secret diplomacy, and distrust across the lines of culture, religion, class and race. Yet for all of these causes, honesty, love, mutual dialogue, restraint, and the pursuit of international law and justice can provide a solution. Ending wars saves lives, avoids humanitarian crises, obviates mass refugee movements, and saves money. It is without question the least costly and most practical form of humanitarian assistance available in the world.

We also emphasize that one-quarter of the current humanitarian need results from natural disasters, which in turn reflect the combination of rising environmental crises combined with social exclusion. The poor and excluded are inevitably the first to suffer from extreme environmental events such as famines, floods, and extreme storms. As with conflict-related humanitarian crises, prevention is also the best remedy for environmental-related crises. This is why the recent agreement in Paris on climate change is essentially a humanitarian triumph. The Paris Agreement, if properly implemented, will spare humanity from many untold risks of climate-related disasters in

the future.

While foresight and prevention are humanity's most powerful humanitarian responses, we recognize that we must also come to the succour of those in dire need when prevention fails, and conflict or extreme natural disasters occur. Wisdom and justice therefore require the combination of prevention – especially of wars and human-caused climate change – and a rapid and just response to those in need when crises nonetheless occur.

In his compelling recent Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls upon us to embrace a global ethic of justice, mercy and peace, especially towards the excluded, the marginalized and "the least of our brothers and sisters". And he calls on us to embrace a common plan for our common home. Pope Francis's powerful words speak to us urgently about the need to prevent humanitarian crises and to respond to them when they occur. He calls on us to be not only just but also practical, taking actions and steps that can make a difference now to those who most urgently need our help.

We take the opportunity of this event, "Reaffirming global solidarity, restoring humanity" to recommit ourselves to the most basic principle of humanity shared by all religions and all humanitarian organisations: to treat other people as we would have them treat us. And we pledge ourselves to jointly look for innovative solutions to address the challenges of a world in crisis through mobilising all available resources to defend the identity, freedom and dignity of all human beings. We call on the United Nations Security Council to show global leadership in a consensus to end the wars and the suffering that is caused by the ongoing conflicts. Jesus declared, "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God". All of humanity can embrace this message.

The presence here today of so many world religious leaders, heads of humanitarian agencies and major donors, is evidence of our determination that every effort should be made to meet global humanitarian needs. The soul of humanitarianism and the current work of secular humanitarian organisations is very often inspired by the ethos of religion, which has inspired a culture of sustainable development. Our faiths, although diverse, teach us the importance of mercy and compassion, and of our common shared humanity.

In a world as wealthy as ours there is a moral imperative to stop the wars, and to help the poor and the stricken – no human being should be left behind for lack of resources to lift each and every individual out of poverty and suffering. This is not just a collective responsibility on the part of the rich and the powerful – although they shoulder a greater duty to respond. Each and every person can play his or her role in reducing human suffering and misery. With the World Humanitarian Summit approaching, we call for that work to begin today.



