

European Humanitarian Forum

Forum humanitaire européen



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European Humanitarian Forum

Kick Off Session

21 March 2022, 9:00-10:15

Moderator: Heba Aly – The New Humanitarian

Panelists: Commissioner Janez Lenarčič ; Smruti Patel - Founder of Global Mentoring Initiative and one of the founders of Alliance for Empowering Partnership ; Dominic Crowley - President of VOICE ; Eman Ismail - International Council of Voluntary Agencies; Sumayia Kabir - CARE, Mariam Toure – Norwegian Refugee Council, Juan Carlos Viloría Doria - Coalición por Venezuela ; Ramesh Rajasingham - Director OCHA Geneva

Executive Summary:

Commissioner Lenarčič kicked off the European Humanitarian Forum referring to the human catastrophe caused by Russia's war on Ukraine. The European Union has been, for 30 years, helping struggling communities around the world and made of humanitarian aid a priority. The European Humanitarian Forum will allow providing a European perspective on humanitarian aid and will focus on actions and solutions to address the rising humanitarian needs. It will be the occasion to shape the future of humanitarian action.

This Kick-off session was the opportunity for a “Hard Talk” panel to reflect on the main humanitarian challenges and opportunities. Several voices provided key insights on the humanitarian sector from a field perspective. Eman Ismail, from the Middle East, stressed the need to ensure humanitarian access and enhance protection for humanitarian workers. She also highlighted the importance of localisation, stating that local actors need a space in the advocacy working group. An equitable partnership where all actors work together must be achieved. Mariam Touré from Africa echoed the need to ensure humanitarian access emphasizing the impact of sanctions, the importance of respect of International Humanitarian Law and the potential consequences of counter terrorism measures. Juan Carlos Viloría Doria, from Latin America, provided insights into how to engage the host community and local communities in the solutions to the humanitarian needs. Sumaiya Kabir, from Asia, focused on the impact of Climate Change and the need for anticipatory actions. She referred to the possibility of considering climate financing as a potential source of contribution as well as to the importance of finding the right balance between adaptation and mitigation

Panellists further reflected on the humanitarian challenges and the way to address them. Smruti Patel touched upon the consequences of conflict around the world as well as the importance of embedding a long-term perspective within the humanitarian aid. She put emphasis on ensuring that local actors are recognized for their work and on the need to show

solidarity. Ramesh Rajasingham focused on the growing funding gap. Failing to address human rights and basic services will lead to increased needs. Development must be addressed more innovatively and include local actors. Dominic Crowley stated that while Humanitarian NGOs must consider their carbon footprint, they could not provide answer to Climate Change. Political leadership is required to address climate change and its root causes. He outlined some areas for work such as to increase efforts to scale up climate finance, ensure that climate measures are locally led with a people centred approach, the need for collaboration between all actors and put emphasis on the fact that climate change is a threat multiplier.