

European Humanitarian Forum

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European Humanitarian Forum

Expanding the resource base for humanitarian aid: a life-saving imperative

22 March 2022, 14:15 – 16:00

Moderator: *Kimberly Flowers*, Executive Director, Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs at Colby College.

Panelists: *Isobel Coleman* (Deputy Administrator for policy and programming, United States Agency for International Development), *Tomas Tobé* (Chair of the Committee on Development (DEVE), European Parliament), *Matilda Ernkrans* (Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden), *Sultan Al Shamsi* (Assistant minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for International Development affairs, UAE), *David Beasley* (Executive Director, World Food Programme), *Mirek Dusek* (Deputy Head of the Centre for Geopolitical and Regional Affairs, World Economic Forum), *Phillippe Lazzarini* (Commissioner-General, UNRWA), *Pierre Micheletti* (President, Action Against Hunger).

Executive Summary:

The High Level Panel discussed the main challenges around expanding the resource base for humanitarian aid in a context of steeply growing needs. All panellists recalled the ongoing military aggression in Ukraine and its humanitarian consequences while also reminding of the importance not to forget existing crises around the world. Isobel Coleman started by pointing to the **enormous gap between increasing needs and available resources**, as illustrated by the 2022 Global Humanitarian Overview. She reminded that a **too small number of donors** are ensuring the majority of funding, a situation that is **not sustainable**. Isobel Coleman called for **collective efforts and new partnerships** to achieve a diverse, equitable and inclusive donor community. She called for **multilateral development banks** to remain active in fragile settings while recalling the important role of **diaspora** groups as private contributors and emphasizing the need for greater **efficiency**. She further outlined the key collaboration between the US and the EU to support humanitarian efforts. Tomas Tobé discussed the recent report adopted by the European Parliament on new orientations for the EU's humanitarian action, which i.a. proposed that Member States would contribute a **fixed share of their Gross National Income to be allocated to humanitarian aid**. He called upon a broader engagement of countries and stressed that challenges are becoming wider in nature. Matilda Ernkrans emphasised that Sweden, as one of the top humanitarian donors, puts humanitarian **needs and principles** at the forefront. She emphasised the importance of showcasing the results of humanitarian aid as well as of enhancing the **efficiency** of humanitarian action (noting the flexibility that unearmarked funding allows), while being **innovative** and turning early warning into **early action**. She called on other donors (including with the EU) to **collectively step up efforts** and pointed to the importance of working together and of acknowledging efforts made by countries that are increasing their humanitarian aid budget. Sultan Al Shamsi shared an overview of the constraints and opportunities related to the broadening of the resource base and pointed out the importance of

early recovery, stabilisation and engagement with locally based organisations. He also mentioned the increasing role played by the **private sector** as well as the need to work closely with development actors in a **nexus** approach to ensure sustainable solutions. David Beasley highlighted the importance of developing **targeted advocacy strategies and messages** when reaching out to different donors. He also referred to the important contribution that the world **richest people** could make to address the funding gap. He warned about the **risk of famine** that is looming as the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine continues. Mirek Dusek outlined the role that the **private sector** plays in the relief effort. He highlighted how investing in vulnerable communities in fragile settings leads to **empowerment** of people and is the path towards more **sustainability and resilience**. Phillippe Lazzarini gave a brief overview of UNRWA and explained how the model on which UNRWA stands is changing towards a more **partnerships** based one. He highlighted the current **funding uncertainty** faced by the organisation and insisted on the **enormous impact on people in need** if aid is not delivered, notably in protracted crises. Pierre Micheletti echoed other speakers in sharing concerns about the increasing humanitarian needs and the devastating consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He outlined that helping those in need can also contribute to global security and emphasised the role played by International NGOs in channelling funding. He proposed to change the current financing model of humanitarian action and made the case for a **mandatory contribution from high-level income countries** calculated on the basis of their gross national income. The High Level Panel concluded with a **common urgent call for new actors to join the collective effort** to address the growing humanitarian funding gap and to contribute to delivering **principled humanitarian aid** around the world. Panellists also acknowledged that **humanitarian aid could not be the solution to crises** and that other actors should be mobilised to seek stability and durable solutions.