



European Union

Global Compact on Refugees - Second thematic session

Fourth panel: How can we bring innovation to humanitarian assistance to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and accountability?

EU Statement

Geneva, 17 October 2017

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

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Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

This panel is dedicated to humanitarian innovation. The EU and its member States want to share their experience in this respect.

The EU and its Member States recognise that responses, in full respect of international human rights law and international refugee law, should be tailored to the specific contexts. Responses should also be guided by the "*do no harm*" principle and by conflict sensitivity, in addition to humanitarian principles."

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid is a key objective of the European Union and its Member States. This was highlighted in a number of strategic documents such as the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and recent Council Conclusions (Council Conclusions on Common Principles for Multi-Purpose Cash-Based Assistance to Respond to Humanitarian Needs, June 2015; Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the World Humanitarian Summit, May 2016).

Innovative approaches, partnerships, financing and technologies, and harnessing science and research, are important for ensuring an efficient and effective response to increasing humanitarian needs. We support multi-stakeholder collaboration also with the private sector and academia to spur effective and demand-driven humanitarian innovation.

In order to better link humanitarian and development response, common needs assessment frameworks and planning tools, such as joint humanitarian and development frameworks, should be used in order to establish coherent response priorities for a multitude of actors.

Preparedness could imply international and regional stand-by. Support arrangements could become active when a country or sub-region is disproportionately affected by a refugee situation. In some situations, rapid response mechanisms as appropriate and mobilising humanitarian organisations to rapidly assess and respond to emergencies should be called upon or developed. Use of budgetary crisis modifiers/contingency windows that would allow for quick reorientation of funding should also be more widely used to ensure ongoing programs can respond rapidly and adequately to displacement crises. Promotion of innovative solutions in the context of enhancing preparedness, including digital, should also be taken into account.

The digital revolution can drive transparency and accountability, particularly vis-à-vis affected people. We need to scale up the use of biometric registration of refugees and use of databases that would allow for interoperability with other national and regional databases and across partners as well as comparisons across regions in full compliance with applicable national legislation on data

protection and international obligations related to privacy as applicable; promote the use of unified standards in order to allow for better comparison across regions.

There is a growing body of evidence which demonstrates that, in some contexts, the use of cash-based assistance can prove more efficient and effective than delivering in-kind humanitarian assistance. In appropriate contexts, this approach ensures better "value for money" by lowering transaction costs; it allows beneficiaries a wider and more dignified choice of assistance, based on their preferences; and it empowers vulnerable groups. It can be a vital contribution to making affected people the prime agents of response. Furthermore, multi-purpose cash-based assistance supports local markets, and can enhance communities' economic recovery, preparedness and resilience, and can in certain cases complement existing social protection systems. The Council of the European Union adopted 10 common principles on use of multi-purpose cash assistance to respond to humanitarian needs and invites humanitarian partners to take the principles into account when designing and implementing responses to humanitarian crises, including in refugee settings.

Thank you, Mr./Ms. Chairperson,