

High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen

Speech by the UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif

2 June 2020

- Your Excellency Muin Abdelmalek,
Prime Minister of the Government of Republic of Yemen
- Your Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
- Mr. António Guterres,
Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Excellency Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah,
the Supervisor General of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre;
- Mr. Mark Lowcock,
the Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator;
- Excellencies and honourable representatives, ladies and gentlemen;

Over the past five years, at least 15 percent of the entire population of Yemen has been forced to flee their homes. Some 3.3 million people remained displaced in Yemen today. Yet, they continue to welcome Internally Displaced Persons in their communities at the heavy cost to host families and communities.

Against this stark background, the COVID-19 pandemic is now spreading at a fast pace in the Yemeni cities. 354 cases with 84 deaths. With the fatality rate at around 24% compared to the global rate of 6%, Yemen's health system may be faced with its greatest challenge yet.

The need for international support to Yemen is more vital than ever, and ever more urgent. Internal Displaced Persons cannot “shelter in place” and communities cannot protect themselves through basic hygiene and social distancing during this pandemic. We need to provide adequate housing and access to basic services for all.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to propose three key actions.

1. We need to do integrated planning so that communities here can begin re-building towns and cities that are safer, more inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

2. We need to scale up our work on adequate shelter and housing, improved access to water and sanitation, protecting Housing, Land and Property rights, and developing urban recovery plans.



3. UN-Habitat fully recognizes that community must act now. We have integrated a people-centered approach to rebuild capacity to foster recovery, stabilization and peacebuilding with all partners.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the financial support for our work provided by the European Union, the Government of Japan, the Saudi Development Reconstruction Program for Yemen and AL-Walid Philanthropies. This support, for improved data and analysis of urban needs, and programmes to provide adequate homes and infrastructure facilities for vulnerable families and IDPs, is vital to stabilize and protect the people.

Now is the time to focus on Yemen, and we join our voice to those speaking today. Together with local governments, stakeholders and the entire international community, UN-Habitat continues to stand ready to help people live with dignity, protect infrastructure for basic needs, build back Yemeni cities and communities, and support a better quality of life for all people of Yemen.

Thanks very much to all of you.