

STANDING TOGETHER AS ONE HUMANITY ON WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

(Yangon, 19 August 2016): On World Humanitarian Day, aid workers in Myanmar are calling for solidarity with all people in humanitarian need around the country and across the globe.

“Today, the scale of human suffering is greater than at any time since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar are affected by crisis, many living in displacement camps and host communities because of conflict and floods. World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity to stand together as one humanity and to reflect on the scale of the humanitarian challenges facing Myanmar. We need to ensure that no one is left behind,” said Ms Renata Dessallien, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar.

World Humanitarian Day 2016 follows the historic World Humanitarian Summit held in May 2016 in Istanbul. Summit participants declared their support for a new Agenda for Humanity and made a collective commitment to deliver better for people in crisis. There was a clear message that this must involve improved investment in disaster preparedness and better integration of local organizations in humanitarian response.

“The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will deliver a key report to the General Assembly next month outlining the next steps on the Summit’s commitments. We look forward to local NGOs, International NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, the United Nations, and the Government working together to turn these commitments into concrete action that will improve the lives of vulnerable people in Myanmar,” said Daw Pansy Tun Thein, Director of the Local Resource Centre in Myanmar.

"The argument for localization in Myanmar is a strong one and international organizations here have already been applying this principle for some time. Local organizations are usually the first and last responders to any crisis, with deep roots in their communities and national staff who have an unmatched capacity to navigate the local context. When floods strike or conflict breaks out, they are the backbone of the response, quickly mobilizing to support evacuations and provide relief. Working more closely with local organizations is the best way to ensure an efficient and timely humanitarian response that meets the needs of people in crisis," said Daw Pansy.

World Humanitarian Day is held on August 19 each year to commemorate the 2003 bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad which claimed 22 lives. At a gathering in Yangon, United Nations Staff and humanitarian partners will mark the occasion with a minute’s silence for their heroic colleagues who have lost their lives in humanitarian service. This includes eight aid workers and volunteers in Myanmar who lost their lives during the August 2015 floods.


“Every day, aid workers save lives in conflicts and disasters, braving tremendous dangers and difficulties to deliver help to those who need it most. My heart goes out to the families of the aid workers who died in last year’s floods in Myanmar. They shared a humanitarian spirit which has again been on full display during the response to the current floods which have displaced close to half a million people across the country,” Ms Dessallien said.

To learn more about World Humanitarian Day visit: www.worldhumanitarianaday.org

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