



## Statement to the World Humanitarian Summit from the CHS Alliance

9 October 2015

Over the past 12 months, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) has been consistent in advocating for the necessity to put people affected by crisis at the centre of the WHS process and agenda, an objective that is central to both the **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability** (CHS) and the **CHS Alliance**. By applying the CHS, the Alliance and its members are turning the nine commitments to people affected by crisis into practice. Aid organisations using the Standard have found that, together with principled humanitarian action, putting people at the centre of humanitarian decision-making is one of the most powerful drivers there is for humanitarian effectiveness.

In light of the WHS, the CHS Alliance brought together a group of humanitarian practitioners and academics to discuss how to improve humanitarian effectiveness and support accountability to people affected by crisis. In many respects, the findings highlighted in this report, entitled [On the Road to Istanbul](#), are not new. Indeed, the fact that there is widespread agreement on the future of humanitarian response is critical. But this also needs to be supported by concrete, practical action as outlined in the *Road to Istanbul*. As stakeholders in this process, we believe that our responsibility doesn't stop at advocacy. While the WHS can drive change, its stakeholders need to also be the agents of change and not merely speak of it.

The key recommendations from the Alliance's *On the Road to Istanbul* are as follows:

### **Principled humanitarian response builds trust and facilitates access**

Any commitment to principled humanitarian action needs to be matched with the resources and practices to ensure it becomes a reality. Building trust and maintaining proximity is essential and improves not only access, but also the relevance of aid. This takes time, and this needs to be acknowledged in the way humanitarian action is resourced.

### **Standards support appropriate, effective and timely aid**

The use of accepted standards such as the CHS or the Sphere Handbook improves programming and transparency. Clear communication to people affected by crisis about the level and quality of their engagement in decision-making allows them to better hold humanitarian actors to account.

### **Humanitarian response is more effective when it acknowledges, builds on and strengthens national capacity**

Building national capacity requires a change in the way the aid sector plans for crises, and funds and resources responses. More direct access to funding, more systematic delegation of system functions (e.g. assessments, monitoring) and ways to mitigate and compensate for staff poaching need to be explored.

### **Collective accountability requires inclusiveness, a common language and transparent decision-making**

Although there have been improvements in the coordination of humanitarian response, it relies on a system in which aid organisations are responsible for their performance on an individual rather than a collective basis. This includes working together to ensure the voices



of people affected by crisis are heard. Collective accountability requires the adoption of a common language, and tools that allow the translation of commitments into concrete actions.

**Good people management practices are paramount for effective aid**

Ultimately, the quality of aid relies on the skills and commitments of people. People management not only helps to ensure organisations hire the right people, but is also responsible for equipping them with the skills and knowledge required for the job. Staff need to be supported to do their job effectively, and treated fairly and equitably. This effort should include adequate levels of support before, during and after humanitarian operations.

Given the broad consensus on the content of the Core Humanitarian Standard, **we call on the World Humanitarian Summit to endorse the CHS as a key framework to orient, assess and measure the quality, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian assistance.** The CHS describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action, providing a common language for accountability across the sector. For more information about the work of the CHS Alliance and its members, visit [www.chsalliance.org](http://www.chsalliance.org)