

## The Humanitarian Forum in 2009—2010

*The Humanitarian Forum* is a network of humanitarian and charitable organisations – Muslim, western, multilateral and national.

We improve the lives of those in need, and relations between communities, through trust building and quality humanitarian action both internationally and locally in a global network of peers.

*The Humanitarian Forum* grew out of a belief that humanitarian work should be a place where diverse communities can come together and find common areas of co-operation, and is founded on the debates in 2005-6 amongst an international Steering Committee and during workshops in 15 countries.

We work *internationally*, convening key stakeholders to improve cooperation and humanitarian space in complex crises. We work *nationally*, supporting local forums to build confidence, connections and skills of NGOs to internationally recognised standards. The forum helps NGOs to better serve their beneficiaries by developing NGOs' skills.



In February 2009, *The Humanitarian Forum* started the “A Hope” series of larger international workshops looking at alternative humanitarian operational partnership and engagement in particular emergencies. These bring key actors together from the multilateral, western and Islamic worlds, as well as international and local NGOs.

The first one was “A Hope for **Gaza**”, *The Humanitarian Forum* gathered key humanitarian organisations in Doha to discuss co-operation and partnership for Gaza. In April 2010, *The Humanitarian Forum* organised “A Hope for **The Balkans**”. 50 NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania, as well international NGOs and the ICRC met to discuss the needs and challenges facing the Balkans' civil society.

In response to the floods in **Pakistan**, *The Humanitarian Forum* helped to develop an agenda and brought donors together for the **Emergency Meeting for the Organisation of Islamic Conference's Humanitarian partners** in August 2010, which raised just under 1 billion USD for the hard-hit people in need of relief. Dr. Hany El-Banna, our president, was there to visit Islamabad, Multan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and attend the OIC conference.

### A HOPE for Somalia

In October 2009, *The Humanitarian Forum* held a workshop in Nairobi for key leaders from the UN, the Red Crescent movement, western and international NGOs and Somali NGOs. It was the first time that many of these people had sat down together. They agreed the importance of dialogue and cooperation, the importance of putting humanitarianism above politics and the key role of Somali civil society leaders.

In 2010, Dr Hany El Banna visited the country in order to discuss humanitarian access with key stakeholders. This is the first in a series of follow up meetings, and we are continuing our strictly apolitical agenda, seeking to bring together different actors in partnership.

*The Humanitarian Forum* believes also that it is important for local NGOs to have forums in their own countries where they can continue to exchange information and experience, and build further partnerships. Without these local forums, improvements that are made in terms of organisations' capacity and impact will be limited.

Presently national forums are being developed in our four pilot countries, which have urgent – and different – humanitarian needs: Indonesia, a Muslim aid recipient country; Kuwait, a Muslim donor country; Sudan, an ethnically and religiously diverse society; Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the world.

*The Humanitarian Forum Indonesia*, one of our national forums, coordinated emergency response amongst its members when a volcano in North Sumatra erupted in August 2010. HFI has worked with ASEAN to implement the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response in Indonesia and south east Asia. This includes mapping the need and challenges at local, national and regional levels.

Together with UNESCO, HFI has set up a ground-breaking community based disaster preparedness toolkit, named PASTI. HFI has created a National Platform, involving the Government and civil society and contributed to international humanitarian standards by helping revise the UN's Sphere Standards. It also launched a Humanitarian Report for Indonesia and contributed to the national disaster risk reduction action plan.

### Humanitarian Forum Yemen

*The Humanitarian Forum Yemen* held a workshop with UNOCHA on the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) in Sana'a, for 28 NGOs. HFY and UNOCHA followed this with an ERF workshop in Hadramout for 19 local NGOs. In response to the needs of local humanitarian actors, the workshops have sought to enhance national Yemeni NGOs' awareness of coordination mechanisms and funding.

HFY also held a "field workshop" on internally displaced persons' needs and camp management, training workshops in strategic planning and financial management, and worked with Islamic Relief to successfully deliver a NGO capacity building project for the European Commission.

As a pledge, it created the "Ramadan basket" campaign, whereby the members of the *The Humanitarian Forum Yemen* pooled together their resources to offer the needy baskets full of commodities, such as sugar, flour, vegetables etc.

*The Humanitarian Forum* and its regional and international partners achieve their goals by focusing on these areas:

- Coordination and Cooperation in the Field
- Accountability in organisations
- Capacity Building
- Confidence and Bridge Building
- Promotion and understanding of Humanitarian policies and standards

For more information on *The Humanitarian Forum* and its members and partners...

... access our website

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