



Istanbul, Turkey | May 23-24, 2016

### **Provision of aid to all those who need it**

Our religious teachings, although diverse, teach us the importance of compassion and of one common shared humanity, where each human being is important in him/herself. Human dignity and the welfare of all people are the main objectives of faith and religion, with the principal role to serve other people. Learning from faith-based organisations, which are known to provide selfless service to all in need, irrespective of their faith, ethnicity, gender, and geography, we (faith-based organisations and other humanitarian actors), **commit** to upholding the principles of compassion, humanity and impartiality in our provision of humanitarian assistance and protection in alignment with fundamental humanitarian principles.

### **Contribution to peace and reconciliation**

In a world where conflicts, violence, and natural disaster affect millions of people, faith-based entities share a critical responsibility and role in working for peace, both at local and national or international levels. We facilitate sustainable behavior and relationship changes based on faith and worldview, offering mediation and sacred space for dialogue between parties.

We **commit** to uphold and expand the significant humanitarian response of faith-based organizations and to overcome the manipulative and abusive attempts to link religion with violence, terrorism, or exclusion of others. By so doing, we aim to resolve conflicts and work to promote reconciliation.

We **call** upon religious communities to use their social capital to amplify humanitarian diplomacy and to promote compliance with International Humanitarian Law as this contributes to the maintenance and restoration of peace.

We call upon the United Nations, international organizations, regional and national authorities to acknowledge and support these roles, and to encourage them.

### **Proximity to communities**

Through local faith communities and grassroots NGOs, faith-based actors are uniquely placed to engage in humanitarian action: faith-based actors often enjoy close proximity to, or are part of the populations affected by wider crises, and have therefore developed special relationships of trust, as well as insights and access to community members compared to many other actors; we are often present before crises, and are first responders when disasters hit. We are key providers of assistance and protection during crises and their aftermath.

We **call** upon international organizations to recognize and affirm the significant, and often unique contributions of religious communities and NGOs, and to consider them to be equal partners, opening up access to adequate funding to support our efforts.

We (faith-based and other humanitarian actors) **commit** to working together to better contextualize humanitarian response, leveraging our added value to reach people in need of assistance and protection, and using our influence to mobilize our local communities in support of these efforts.

### **Direct humanitarian contribution**

In addition to their social and spiritual work, faith-based organizations conduct humanitarian action in situations of crises, for the benefit of all people affected, those sharing their faith as well as those of other faiths and non-believers.

We **call** for this support to be recognized by international and national actors, and government and donor organisations, as a contribution to alleviating needs and the effects of humanitarian crises.

We **call** for constructive dialogue between faith and non-faith players in the larger interest of communities in need.

We **call** upon leaders of communities, other community-based religious organizations, to educate faith and community leaders in humanitarian action in collaboration with faith-based humanitarian organizations, as we expect humanitarian actors to be educated in the unique ways of working and perspective of the faith community.

Our commitment to end hunger and to serve the most vulnerable in a humanitarian setting depends on knowledge and sensitivity to cultural and religious norms. We **commit** to bringing our intimate knowledge of community needs, practices, fears, and hopes to humanitarian work.

We **commit** to keeping affected persons at the center of all assistance planned and provided, maintaining robust beneficiary feedback mechanisms.

We **commit** to ensuring that women and girls rights are protected, their needs are met, and that their ability to engage in decision making is enhanced; as this is a proven strategy for increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian action as a means of building resilience for all members of families and communities.

We **commit** to continuing to play an active role in response coordination, while we reinforce organizational systems and structures to allow us to meet growing humanitarian needs.

### **Spiritual assistance**

Religious communities and faith-based organisations are uniquely positioned to provide spiritual assistance to people affected by conflict and disaster.

We **request** all actors to recognise the right of communities in need to access the best of spiritual service and seek to collaborate with faith leaders and faith based organisations to provide for the same.

In addition to material assistance and other services, we therefore **commit** to facilitating spiritual assistance which can significantly contribute to the population's sense of hope during and after a disaster, while prohibiting pressuring people into any religious practice.

We **commit** to continuing to work with national governments to recognize and affirm the role of faith and faith based organisations to provide faith-based assistance to communities in need.