

World Humanitarian Day 2011 Key Messages

- Every year, disasters cause immense suffering for millions of people – usually the world's poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable individuals. Humanitarian aid workers strive to provide life-saving assistance and long term rehabilitation to disaster-affected communities, regardless of where they are in the world and without discrimination.
- Humanitarian aid is based on a number of founding principles, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Humanitarian aid workers want to be able to access those in need in order to provide vital assistance. This wish should be respected.
- Humanitarian aid workers are from all corners of the world, male and female, and reflect all cultures and backgrounds. The majority come from the countries in which they work. Strong, professional and independent local organisations are key actors in all humanitarian responses.
- Everyone can be a humanitarian. People affected by disasters are the first to help their own communities following a disaster. Communities, local partner organizations, international organizations and the general public can build a chain of solidarity to support communities in responding to and recovering from disasters.
- Responding to emergencies is only one aspect of humanitarian work. Humanitarian workers also support communities to rebuild their lives after disasters, to become more resilient to future crises, to help their voices to be heard, and to build lasting and sustainable peace in areas of conflict.
- Today, the most pressing humanitarian crisis in the world is unfolding in the Horn of Africa. Famine has spread in Somalia, including Mogadishu, and threatens to expand throughout the south. Many people are dying. 12.4 million people in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti urgently need our help and the numbers are increasing. Humanitarian partners continue to work hard on the ground to save lives. Their commitment must be matched by donors, the private sector and individuals alike.
- The theme of World Humanitarian Day 2011 is "People Helping People".