



Meeting of IATI Steering Committee Members and Observers: 2-3 December 2015
Auditorium 3, UN City, Marmorvej 51, Copenhagen, Denmark

Paper 6B: IATI and the World Humanitarian Summit 2016

Introduction

The first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) is an initiative of the UN Secretary-General, for which the process is managed by a secretariat within UN OCHA. The summit will take place in Istanbul in May next year and will “bring together governments, humanitarian organizations, people affected by humanitarian crises and new partners including the private sector to propose solutions to our most pressing challenges and set an agenda to keep humanitarian action fit for the future”.¹ The outcome of the WHS will be informed by the two-year consultation process, a Synthesis Report that summarises the consultations, a report by the UN Secretary General expected in January 2016, and a further report by the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing expected to be published in December this year.

Despite the fact that key reports are yet to be published, a number of conclusions and proposals are already emerging. There is a strong call for greater transparency and real-time tracking of all resources; better visibility of the cost of operations and value for money; and increased capacity for tracking and analysing financial flows. Concrete recommendations on these areas, however, have not yet materialised.

An opportunity for IATI

Data that is timely, promotes traceability throughout the implementation chain and provides a view of the total resources available is critical to operational decision-making in fast-onset humanitarian crises, and this has been highlighted in a succession of high profile emergencies from Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, to the West Africa Ebola Virus outbreak and most recently with regard to the Nepal earthquake. To date, there has been a limit to what IATI can offer, as the Standard was designed to meet the needs of development actors, rather than the humanitarian community.

Following a number of multi-stakeholder consultations with the humanitarian community, technical work to include humanitarian requirements in the IATI Standard was completed over the summer, and incorporated as part of the 2.02 decimal upgrade. This adds a small number of optional fields to the Standard that reflect the needs of humanitarian actors including humanitarian policy markers, humanitarian emergencies and appeals, a humanitarian flag and humanitarian clusters. The recent changes ensure compatibility and inter-operability with UN OCHA’s Financial Tracking System (FTS) and crucially, address the issue of timeliness in the context of fast-onset humanitarian crises by enabling daily publishing during rapidly evolving crises. Normally, IATI asks that publishers update their data at least quarterly, and ideally monthly. This is inadequate in humanitarian crises, where actors on the ground need data that

¹ World Humanitarian Summit website - <https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org>

is as close to real time as possible in order to maximise operational effectiveness in fast-moving situations. Taken together, the recent optional changes mean that the Standard can now be used to capture timely and comprehensive data on humanitarian crises.

With the necessary technical work completed, the Summit provides IATI with a good opportunity to promote its value in future humanitarian crises. As always, that value will rely on the timeliness and quality of the data provided by publishers. To capitalise on this opportunity, Steering Committee members are invited to consider the following actions:

Recommendations for action

- 1) To highlight the Standard's capacity to provide more timely data in humanitarian crises, Steering Committee members involved in humanitarian response should make a clear commitment to update their humanitarian-flagged IATI data on a daily basis in future fast-onset humanitarian crises.
- 2) Identify a handful of IATI members who agree to become "early adopters" and begin publishing data to the new optional humanitarian fields in advance of the WHS in May 2016. One option that could be considered is to trial the new IATI data fields in a particular crisis, for example the Nepal earthquake response, to provide a working model of how IATI data could be used in future humanitarian emergencies.

If members are keen to pursue these proposals, the Secretariat will scope the opportunity for a side-event on transparency/IATI at the WHS to showcase this work, raising the profile of IATI and its members in this area, in collaboration with other key actors.