

Grand Bargain Statement

Australia and New Zealand

June 2019

Australia and New Zealand acknowledge with gratitude the enormous contribution of the outgoing Eminent Person, Ms Kristalina Georgieva, and expresses thanks for the leadership she has provided to the Grand Bargain process. We warmly welcome the new Eminent Person, Minister Sigrid Kaag of the Netherlands. We look forward to supporting Minister Kaag in her role. We also want to thank the convenors of the Facilitation Group – Sweden, US, OCHA, UNICEF, InterAction and the IFRC - for their stewardship over the past twelve months.

We also thank ODI for their sterling efforts in compiling the annual report again. It reveals mixed progress in implementing our individual and collective Grand Bargain commitments – good progress in some areas; stagnation in others. But this should not be a reason for complacency or a cause for alarm. Systemic transformations take time; change in the complex, multi-stakeholder, global humanitarian ecosystem will be incremental. Accordingly, expectations regarding the pace of reform must remain realistic. In this light, Australia and New Zealand fully endorse the focus of the 2019 Grand Bargain Annual Meeting to leverage and scale-up successes while identifying bottlenecks to collective progress on the more challenging aspects of the Grand Bargain.

The overall trajectory is positive; our efforts in Istanbul are being rewarded. Significant progress is visible across several reform priorities including localisation, cash based transfers and multi-year donor funding. We particularly welcomed the workshop on shock-responsive, social protection mechanisms convened by the cash work stream in Geneva in April as an important step towards enabling national authorities to quickly deliver assistance to affected populations and an example of bridging the humanitarian-development divide. We also note the concerted effort of the Friends of Gender group over the past twelve months to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into the work streams. But we also take this opportunity to remind signatories of the collective commitments we made under the *Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action* - an aspect of the reform agenda that is not yet captured in Grand Bargain reporting.

Australia and New Zealand collaborate closely on humanitarian action in the Pacific region. We jointly developed a monitoring and evaluation framework to strengthen the effectiveness of our humanitarian responses to rapid-onset disasters in the Pacific. The framework guides our individual and collective action to ensure we are working towards shared goals. It is the sort of practical collaboration we would like to see across the global humanitarian system.

Accountability to affected populations is at the heart of Australia and New Zealand's humanitarian action and underpins the monitoring and evaluation framework, which is anchored in the Core Humanitarian Standard. Our expectations of partners has increased in this regard. Affected populations must be included in decision-making processes whenever possible to aid the shift toward demand-driven assistance. Similarly, we endeavour to pilot new approaches and new technology to improve feedback mechanisms. Our assistance needs to be agile and able to pivot to the feedback from communities.

We have strengthened our support for national- and locally-led disaster preparedness and response in the Pacific and have embedded the policy of 'as local as possible and as international as necessary' in our humanitarian action. We support complementary initiatives, working alongside Pacific

National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) to build institutional capacity, strengthen national coordination systems and empower national leadership.

Together, we support the Pacific Community to deliver regional and national training, exercises, and provide technical assistance for Pacific Island Countries' emergency services via the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance. We also work with the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the Strengthening Emergency Medical Teams Project to enhance the ability of Pacific countries (Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands) to plan for, coordinate and lead responses to health emergencies. We congratulate the Fiji Emergency Medical Assistance Team (FEMAT) on their recent WHO verification, making it the first emergency medical team from the Pacific able to meet international standards and ready for deployment across the region.

In line with the Grand Bargain, Australia and New Zealand are also stepping up the use of cash in emergencies, building on the successful use of cash-based assistance following Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji (2016) and Tropical Cyclone Gita in Tonga (2018). We recognise the importance of investing in cash preparedness activities with national and local stakeholders. Through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster READY program, partners conducted a Cash Transfer feasibility study as part of disaster preparedness activities in Vanuatu. On the back of this work, New Zealand delivered a NZ\$2 million cash transfer program to displaced families following the eruption of the Ambae Volcano in Vanuatu.

We will look for further opportunities to incentivise improvements in cash-based assistance, including through more joined-up approaches and strengthened coordination of cash-based delivery. Australia is actively involved in exploring the development of shock-responsive social protection systems in the Indo-Pacific region and we will continue to push for preparedness to include baseline mapping of existing systems that might be leveraged when disasters strike.

In protracted crises, Australia and New Zealand continue to ensure our funding packages are multi-year and flexible, including for the Syria and Iraq responses in the case of Australia. We are working with our partners to ensure this translates into multi-year planning and predictability for downstream partners, as we look for options to expand this approach into other protracted crisis responses we are supporting. Together, we are building the evidence base to capture the benefits of multi-year commitments. Demonstrating these benefits in terms of lives and dollars saved will be a compelling narrative to secure and sustain broad political support.

Celebrating our successes is equally as important as noting the areas for which we need to 'up our game.' Moving forward, we will continue to scale-up these successes while re-focusing on areas where progress has been more modest. Australia and New Zealand will continue to advocate for, and model, collective action. We will push for improvements in the consistency and quality of joint needs assessments and analyses to ensure we support demand-driven assistance. And we will explore structural reforms to funding allocations that encourage collaboration - not fragmentation. The sum of our work must be greater than our individual parts.

The success of the Grand Bargain hinges on the impact of collective action. Australia and New Zealand will continue our efforts to realise the ambition of the Grand Bargain, unlocking greater efficiencies to deliver better humanitarian outcomes for people in need.