

## **Grand Bargain Statement**

### **Australia and New Zealand**

**June 2020**

Australia and New Zealand acknowledge with gratitude the ongoing contribution of the Eminent Person, Ms Sigrid Kaag of the Netherlands, and express thanks for the leadership and guidance she continues to provide to the Grand Bargain process. We also thank ODI for their contribution in compiling the Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging humanitarian operating models. Now, more than ever, we must work together to find the opportunities within the disruption. The Grand Bargain commitments set in 2016 provide the common goals and aspirations to unite donors, the United Nations and civil society organisations towards more fit-for-purpose and cost-effective humanitarian action. The closure of borders and the resulting restrictions on access by international actors provides an opportunity to progress the localisation agenda in particular. Australia and New Zealand acknowledge the responsive and coordinated regional and national Pacific leadership and the role of UN agencies and civil society in responding to the impacts of COVID-19 in the region.

Australia and New Zealand will look for opportunities to test new ways of working, including new partnership and financing models that support locally-led humanitarian action in the Pacific region and beyond.

As the Pacific emerges from a destructive cyclone season, there were many opportunities to support localisation and test new ways of working in a COVID-19 constrained environment. Tropical Cyclone Harold affected four Pacific Island countries as, at its height, a Category Five system. Australia and New Zealand were able to work collaboratively with affected country governments, United Nations and civil society partners to provide a safe and “COVID-free” response. In line with partner government requests, Australia and New Zealand agreed to focus on different geographic areas to ensure lifesaving assistance was efficient and well-coordinated.

The metric of success for localisation will be the extent to which international actors – including donors - shift the power of decision-making and influence to local actors over time; COVID-19 offers a catalyst for progressing localisation in practice. We acknowledge that donors have an important role to play to incentivise partnerships built on equity and two-way learning. In the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand continue to meet the priorities of affected governments to lead humanitarian responses, and support local civil society to deliver locally led initiatives.

Australia’s multi-year humanitarian package in Bangladesh and Myanmar trials two new features to empower local actors: (1) we ask funding partners to jointly develop with their downstream partners a capacity-building plan to strengthen local institutions and local capacity over time; and (2) we ask funding partners to demonstrate how local partners are playing an increased role in response decision making over time. In this package, Australia also secured agreement from all UN and NGO partners to provide streamlined reporting using the 8+3 template. This is an example of how Grand Bargain reforms at the global level are influencing operational improvements at the country and organisational level.

Australia and New Zealand's jointly developed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework continues to strengthen the effectiveness of our humanitarian responses to rapid-onset disasters in the Pacific. The framework, which was jointly applied in the Samoa Measles response in late 2019, guides our individual and collective action to ensure we are working towards shared goals. As part of a multi-year

humanitarian package to the Syria crisis, Australia has worked closely with UNHCR Lebanon to strengthen monitoring and evaluation to better capture, demonstrate and communicate the impact of assistance for refugees. This 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 continues to increase in this regard. Affected populations must be included in decision-making processes whenever possible to aid the shift toward demand-driven assistance.

In addition, we continue to work with other partners, Australia through the Grand Bargain Friends of Gender Group in particular, to ensure Grand Bargain processes and outcomes serve to advance efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action.

We continue to look for opportunities to incentivise improvements in cash-based assistance, including through more joined-up approaches and strengthened coordination of cash-based delivery. In response to Tropical Cyclone Harold, New Zealand supported a cash assistance programme through Oxfam in Vanuatu while in Fiji, Australia used the national welfare scheme to provide nationwide cash assistance to approximately 166,200 beneficiaries over a two-month period. Our collective cash-based assistance supported affected communities to make critical repairs to damaged infrastructure and rebuild livelihoods. Australia also supported WFP's pilot of blockchain technology to deliver cash-based food assistance in Jordan at reduced transaction costs – this model can be replicated in other contexts.

Australia and New Zealand will continue to advocate for, and model, collective action in our region. 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.

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.