

**United States Government**  
**Statement for 2020 Annual Grand Bargain Meeting**

The U.S. Government continues to lead in provision of global humanitarian assistance worldwide, including committing significant resources to respond to the crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. With humanitarian needs continuing to grow, we remain committed to the Grand Bargain as a way to enhance the humanitarian response at all levels through greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Donors must have confidence that their funding is being used in the most efficient manner possible. To begin with, these reforms must include and be founded in transparency, objectivity, and accountability, producing prioritized appeals that are based on joint needs assessments and resulting in more effective and cost-efficient programs that are also free of fraud and waste.

Even as we rapidly scale our response to COVID-19, we have seen overall humanitarian needs continue to grow, and the gap in funding against appeals persists. Informed prioritization is key to addressing the critical life-saving needs that result from COVID-19, and at the same time ensuring existing humanitarian needs are met.

As outlined in the joint donor letter to the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) in June 2019, we remain focused on – and expect our partners to remain focused on – accelerating key improvements to enhance the quality of the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC) that feed into humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans: 1) better data and improved data collection; 2) improved data transparency; 3) strengthened joint needs analysis; 4) clearer response prioritization; 5) evidence costing methodologies; 6) enhanced monitoring; and 7) ensuring accountability to affected people through throughout the process.

In the 2020 HPC we saw some progress, which provides an important basis on which to further build. For example, multi-sector needs assessments (MSNAs) provided comparable year-on-year household level data in a number of crises. The continued roll out of the Data Entry and Exploratory Platform (DEEP) demonstrated the potential of this online platform to improve needs determination and monitoring. The inclusion of preliminary elements of the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) in the HPC was cited in reviews of the HPC as helping to identify priority geographic areas or populations groups, improving the quality of analysis.

Alongside improvements to the HPC, the U.S. Government's funding in 2019 reflected increasing alignment to humanitarian appeals overall, as recorded in the Financial Tracking System (FTS). The U.S. Government will continue to support the development and roll out of tools to improve the rigor of assessment data and analysis that inform appeals, including investing in comprehensive data collection, such as joint MSNAs, and bolstering information management capacity of the humanitarian system. As we have stipulated in the past, increased U.S. budgetary support for U.N. humanitarian agencies must enhance transparent data collection, which is helping to develop prioritized, evidence-based response plans.

We recognize there have been challenges in finalizing the joint intersectoral analysis framework. Even as the full framework continues to be developed, we expect the 2021 HPC will include further improvements to joint analysis, resulting in the identification of priorities based on the severity of people's needs. We urge all partners and the IASC to demonstrate a commitment to

this effort, and more clearly prioritized response plans that focus on the most urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations. Improved coordination of peacebuilding, humanitarian, and development efforts is also key. This progress is critical to enable donors to further align their resources with response plans and better prioritize funding to meet the most severe needs.

The U.S. Government continues to support flexible and timely funding through available approved mechanisms. However, before we can consider reducing earmarking, we continue to require proof of major progress on transparency and the elimination of duplication and all other unnecessary costs in both budgeting and operations, while ensuring necessary accountability. This proof should demonstrate significant quantifiable savings compared to the *status quo* as well as benchmarks and timelines for further progress. At the same time, in the wake of recent public examples of fraud and waste, accountability also requires maintaining and strengthening operational oversight.

The U.S. Government is also committed to transparency and efficiency within our own systems and processes. For example, as USAID rationalizes internal processes, including merging the Offices of Food for Peace and Foreign Disaster Assistance, the new Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance is reducing duplication and filling gaps in its programs, saving taxpayer dollars and improving beneficiary outcomes. The USG is also continuing to pilot the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and FTS data interoperability, and encourages signatories to publish to IATI given our shared responsibility to report humanitarian financial and activity data.

We have seen important initiatives under the Grand Bargain over the past four years, and we now see many of those being rapidly scaled and tested with the COVID-19 crisis. With new demands on local actors and national partners, the need for good partnership practices, including strengthening local capacity has been accentuated. Likewise, learning from the Ebola response has demonstrated the critical need for meaningful community engagement and communication in outbreak response. Continuing to integrate women's empowerment and equality throughout programs and policies to advance the rights of women and girls is paramount. There is also a key role for cash programming to meet humanitarian needs as appropriate, and with careful regard for beneficiary protection and financial oversight, and we seek a resolution to the lack of predictable, formal cash coordination within the humanitarian architecture.

We are grateful for Eminent Person Kaag's leadership during these extraordinarily challenging times. As we approach the five-year anniversary of the Grand Bargain, we support a collective effort to look more closely at why we have not achieved greater system-wide change. We see value in maintaining this unique platform while exploring how initiatives under the Grand Bargain can more systematically lead to needed reforms that will maximize the outcomes for the most vulnerable beneficiaries and the value of the taxpayer dollars that fund the response to global humanitarian needs. We welcome the continued discussions on risk and risk management within the Grand Bargain in this regard.

When we meet in June 2021, as the largest humanitarian donor, we expect at a minimum that the humanitarian system is able to convey humanitarian priorities based on the severity of need, and demonstrate that significant efficiencies have been made in the management of operations to meet those needs.