

Statement for SCHR Grand Bargain annual meeting

To be delivered by Abby Maxman, Oxfam America CEO, Tues 15th June 2.30pm (CET)

4 minutes maximum

On behalf of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, I would like to thank Minister Kaag for her leadership of the Grand Bargain and to welcome Jan Egeland into this role.

We gather this week for the annual meeting against the backdrop of the news of Ethiopia on the verge of the largest famine since Somalia in 2011. Humanitarian appeals are larger than ever before; the number of internally displaced people has reached an all-time high, and gender-based violence is at record levels following the pandemic.

Amid so many crises it's easy to get disheartened, but the past five years of investment under the Grand Bargain has also contributed to important progress —increased political attention to driving real shifts in power to affected people and local responders, and the growing systemic moves to increase the use of cash programming and harmonise reporting.

The Grand Bargain's membership, structures, and convening power has made it an important collaborative space for tackling system-wide financing issues. SCHR members have provided leadership in the Participation Revolution, localisation and quality funding Workstreams, including through the work of the Friends of Gender Group, and have played an active role in all other workstreams.

Already, the active participation of Grand Bargain signatories in workstream two on localisation has led to increased strategic engagement with local actors at field and headquarters level, and a more concerted effort to support local partners' increased access to international funding. We look forward to building on this momentum in the Grand Bargain 2.0.

However, real progress is dependent upon even greater power-sharing with local leadership, and on addressing the gender equality gaps highlighted in several recent studies. Current Grand Bargain efforts are restricted by its limited membership. We must step up power-sharing with stakeholders not often heard or included in humanitarian decision-making spaces, including diverse local women-led, women's rights, and refugee-led organisations. We must assure governments of affected communities are engaged as fundamental partners to prevent and respond to humanitarian crises, as well as realize triple nexus shared goals of meeting humanitarian needs, lasting peace, and inclusive and sustainable development. To confront the unprecedented humanitarian challenges of the 21st

century, Grand Bargain 2.0 must go beyond older ways of working and build a more inclusive and locally led humanitarian ecosystem that is fit for purpose.

To realize the changes envisioned, we will need mechanisms for better risk sharing, and we welcome the increased focus on culture change on risk in the Grand Bargain 2.0. Given the urgency of the situation, we support a stock-take of the Grand Bargain's progress in two-years but also recognise that a longer-time period is needed for systemic change.

The Grand Bargain can and should continue to play an important role within existing humanitarian resources, but more is needed. We need to have a broader reform process that addresses the systems that perpetuate crises, deepens and broadens the resource base, and galvanises collective action around our "shared responsibility" to shrink the need.

The SCHR supports a "Grand Bargain 2.0" that is more inclusive of affected communities and grounded at the country level. I urge all of us gathered here to go beyond the goal of effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, and demonstrate political will and leadership that centre gender equality and reduces need.