

**Statement for the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting**

Greetings to all our colleagues and friends, wherever in the world you may be.

As we work towards a world that is free from the COVID-19, we cannot forget the way all of us have been able to adapt our response by accelerating the Grand Bargain commitments in the spirit of *quid pro quo*.

Last year, we saw evidence of the Grand Bargain's ability to react in a flexible way and adapt the humanitarian response to the new COVID-19 reality. This helped to ensure that the humanitarian system upheld the spirit of *Leave no one behind* even in the face of massive uncertainty, closure of borders, and ongoing conflicts.

The COVID-19 response has shown us that powerful community engagement and the great support of local and national actors are central to pandemic response and efforts to ensure that communities everywhere are better prepared, better equipped and better funded to respond to future health outbreaks are essential to prevent socio economic crisis.

During WHO's own efforts to respond to the pandemic, we saw the Grand Bargain at play in two important ways:

- Increased unearmarked funding for the COVID-19 response allowed us to increase the number of country offices benefiting from multi-year and flexible humanitarian funding agreements;
- We supported national capacities to respond to the pandemic based on sound data analysis and Risk Communication and Community Engagement, allowing national governmental and non-governmental actors to inform response policy and programming.

We must maintain this momentum in the Grand Bargain 2.0, ensuring that better-quality funding and partnerships drive our collective response to humanitarian emergencies, including and beyond COVID-19.

For all these reasons, WHO remains committed to the Grand Bargain and its vision of a more efficient, accountable, flexible and local humanitarian response.

I thank you.

Dr Ibrahima Socé Fall  
Assistant Director-General, Emergency Response, WHO Health Emergencies Programme