

Grand Bargain Annual Meeting Statement

Australia

June 2022

Australia remains strongly committed to the Grand Bargain. In an era of growing humanitarian need, reform remains critical.

This Annual Meeting is an opportunity to harness individual and collective action to accelerate and deepen reform efforts in the final year of Grand Bargain 2.0. The agreed enabling priorities for a more effective and efficient humanitarian system fit squarely with Australian objectives—in particular our focus on localisation, participation, and multi-year, flexible funding. We believe that Pacific voices and those from other small island developing states add to our understanding of reform and its impacts. The following practical examples of reform initiatives are drawn from Australia's efforts to progress localisation.

We work closely and collaboratively with governments and institutions in the Indo-Pacific to position our assistance under their leadership. This allows us to assist quickly and effectively at times of crisis, and also to support local leadership, capacity building and preparedness over the longer term.

For example, our long-standing links in Tonga meant that Australia was positioned to assist quickly and effectively during the response to the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption and tsunami in January 2022. Working under the direction of the Tongan Government helped to ensure Australian-funded supplies were delivered equitably and in line with community governance structures. With the disruption of international communications, Australia assumed a donor coordination role in partnership with the Tongan government through the FRANZ partnership mechanism (France, Australia, New Zealand). To date, Australia has provided AUD 17.27 million in direct budget support to the Government of Tonga through social protection top-up payments and assistance to businesses damaged or lost during the disaster. This was guided by a mutually agreed objective to empower the most vulnerable in Tongan society, with a focus on gender equality and those with disabilities.

Over the longer term, we are working through an international development organisation in the Pacific—the Secretariat of the Pacific Community—to support the leadership of National Disaster Management Offices and build the capacity of national emergency responders from 14 Pacific

countries, through the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance. This work is underpinned by a commitment to ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of women, girls, those with disabilities and other marginalised groups, as community leaders, first responders and agents of change who have unique knowledge and experience essential to the survival and resilience of their communities.

In further support of regional collaboration, in September 2022 Australia will host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. This will support the region's progress towards disaster risk reduction efforts under the Sendai Framework. Localisation is a cross-cutting priority in the conference, with a particular spotlight on the island and coastal communities of the region.

We have established multi-year, flexible partnerships with innovative partners who are making sustained and transformative change to drive localisation. Our five-year, AUD 50 million arrangement with the Australian Red Cross (ARC) has supported a phased transfer of power and resources to other national red cross societies. We are assisting these societies to lead their own response efforts and become more financially sustainable. At the same time, this partnership has helped to redefine ARC's role. In 2015, ARC employed 93 Australia-based staff in its international programs; in 2022 the comparable figure is 39. DFAT and ARC support helps national societies like the Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Red Cross) to make key decisions for the 2021 flood response in Timor-Leste.

We are driving long-term reform priorities through updated strategic partnership frameworks with our six largest multilateral humanitarian partners. The frameworks align and formalise expectations of our United Nations partners and the International Committee of the Red Cross on reform priorities such as localisation and inclusion. They will be accompanied by performance measures to analyse and spur reform efforts, consistent with their respective four-year strategic plans. These strategic partnership frameworks will underpin and drive impact through Australia's multi-year and flexible funding to humanitarian partners in protracted crises, including support to crises in Bangladesh and Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Ukraine, and their regions.

Australia will continue to drive practical action and progress on its commitments and looks forward to progressing the continued collective ambition for Grand Bargain 2.0.