ACBAR Press Release: ACBAR's recommendations for the World Humanitarian Summit Istanbul, 23rd-24th May 2016

The Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) was created in 1988, as a response to the demand from the many civilian independent aid agencies for a coordinated approach to humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. ACBAR's main mandate is to serve and facilitate the work of its 151 national and international NGO members in order to address efficiently the development and humanitarian needs of Afghans.

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) will be held in Istanbul, Turkey on the 26th-27th May 2016. This is the first global summit of its size and scope to be held on humanitarian action. It is an initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General to bring the global community together in order to map out a new humanitarian approach that is more effective and inclusive, and more representative of the needs and challenges of millions of people today and in years to come. With the humanitarian system is being stretched to its maximum across the globe, with crisis's in South Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and the Central African Republic and the Ebola crisis, Afghanistan must not be forgotten.

In the lead up to the World Humanitarian Summit, ACBAR have held various consultations to capture the perspectives and recommendations of varying humanitarian actors across the country. It is now the time to see the recommendations from these consultations turned to action. The WHS provides Afghanistan the opportunity to:

1) **Support to Afghan institutions, NGOs and local communities for response capacity through increased funding to local humanitarian preparedness**- At a local level, local actors should be empowered to meaningfully participate in efforts to localize humanitarian action and partner with humanitarian organisations. Local specialist knowledge must inform emergency preparedness and humanitarian assessments, programme design, quality accountability efforts. Donors should invest further in strengthening humanitarian coordination, financing and leadership mechanisms in order to improve the quality, relevance and timeliness of humanitarian responses.

2) **Reaffirm commitments to respect and promote the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and International Humanitarian Law**- The 'humanitarian space' in Afghanistan must be protected. During the WHS, Afghanistan's representatives should commit to engage with stakeholders from different sides of the conflict with an end to ensuring better respect and understanding of International Humanitarian Law, with particular regard to the neutral and impartial role of the humanitarian aid community. This has to be mainstreamed throughout government and civil society.

3) Prioritize and fund needs-based humanitarian programs that target vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, and persons with disabilities, - As part of this, assessments must be inclusive and the most vulnerable people must be identified in any given emergency. Data must be collected disaggregated by sex, age and disability taking into account contextual factors such as family or social support, discrimination, and household socio-economic situation. Vulnerable people must be meaningfully consulted and have participation in the crisis response's decision-making and planning processes.

For a more comprehensive summary of ACBAR's findings and recommendations towards the WHS, please read ACBAR's full Paper: "*The World Humanitarian Summit: A Call for Strengthened and Coordinated Action*"

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