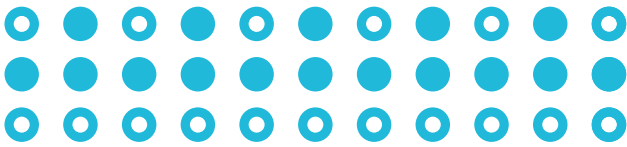
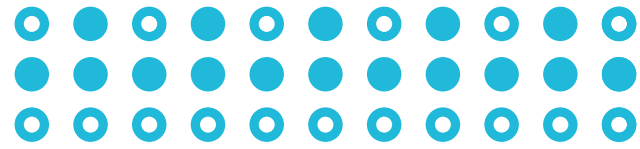




**GLOBAL  
HUMANITARIAN  
POLICY FORUM**  
2019

**The Changing Global  
Landscape:  
What's Next for  
Humanitarian Action?**







On 13 December 2019, OCHA convened senior-level representatives from civil society, the business community, the philanthropic sector, faith communities, academia, the military and think tanks for its eighth annual Global Humanitarian Policy Forum (GHPF) under the theme “*The Changing Global Landscape: What’s Next for Humanitarian Action?*” For the first time, this year’s GHPF was co-hosted with the United Nations Foundation, which helps the UN mobilize ideas, people and resources to drive global progress and tackle urgent challenges, including those at the heart of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the Forum, six key trends emerged as critical to shaping the future of humanitarian response. These include: rising nationalism and the retreat from multilateralism; increased conflicts and the fracture of global norms; the rise of political, social and economic inequality; the accelerating impacts of climate change; new and emerging technologies; and the spread of infectious diseases. These trends present a particularly complex landscape for humanitarian action.

# **Six Emerging Trends Impacting the Future of Humanitarian Action**



# 1 Rising Nationalism and the Retreat from Multilateralism

While the multilateral institutions established 75 years ago have been proven to save lives, generate socioeconomic progress and prevent war, today multilateralism is under immense stress. The globe's most pressing problems – from climate change to migration and displacement, from conflict to disease outbreaks – are transboundary and require multilateral solutions. Despite this, multilateralism is being challenged by the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism, and increasingly, domestic concerns are taking precedence over global problems.

As a result, we are seeing the erosion of the humanitarian imperative – the principle that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering whenever and wherever it arises. States are becoming more insular and more aid-sceptic, and are increasingly pulling back from international norms and agreements. Broad-based public support for international aid is being challenged and aid is becoming increasingly politicized, with donor support often masked and shaped by geopolitical interests. Broader geopolitical shifts and changes in 'patron' States, particularly in Africa, could further impact who provides humanitarian assistance and how it is provided. Understanding how to navigate these trends and work with new partners to address these issues will be a pressing challenge for humanitarian organizations moving forward.

**“ The discrediting of the multilateral system persists because countries do not see it as converging with their national interests. This perception needs to be turned around. ”**





## 2 Rise in Conflicts and the Fracture of Global Norms

After a short period of decline, the number of global conflicts is now on the rise. Many of these conflicts are becoming protracted as they are met with weaker international efforts to resolve them. They are also becoming increasingly internationalized – with States willing to fight their geostrategic positions and interests in other countries, providing finance, arms and political cover – thus making them more difficult to resolve. In the past, humanitarian crises and crimes against humanity such as in Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Bosnia spurred international action such as the Responsibility to Protect commitment and a strengthening of norms and accountability mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court. Peacemaking efforts and accountability mechanisms are now under siege, with little interest from P5 countries to bring parties to the table and widespread impunity for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The consequences of retreat from conflict resolution efforts will loom large in the next decade as even smaller conflicts left unattended likely grow in scale and complexity. As a result, we will see mounting levels of humanitarian need.

We are also in a “golden era” of norm-breaking. The absence of moral leadership, coupled with ongoing systematic violations of international laws and norms without accountability, has sent

a dangerous message to all corners of the world that violating international laws and human rights with impunity is acceptable. The erosion of international norms lessens incentives for collective action to resolve disputes and increases the “numbness” to rule-breaking. It also makes the delivery of humanitarian assistance more difficult, as witnessed by the growing number of attacks against civilians, aid workers and facilities. Without significant changes in political leadership, a renewal of multilateralism and peace efforts, and the unwavering reinforcement of international norms and standards, these forces and trends speak to a humanitarian caseload that will dynamically increase in the coming decade.

**“ We are living in the golden era of norm-breaking. ”**





# 3 The Rise of Inequality

Economic, political and social inequality are on the rise, each one reinforcing the other and leading to entrenched vulnerability and increased humanitarian needs. According to UNDESA’s *World Social Report 2020*, inequality is growing for more than 70 per cent of the global population. Despite steady gains in global wealth and development, more people are being left behind due to rising inequalities in income and wealth, unequal access to technology and resources, and the accelerating impacts of climate change. Without drastic mitigating measures, inequality will become an increasingly important driver of humanitarian needs over the next decade.

While economic inequality continues to widen the financial gap between the rich and the poor, other forms of inequality will also shape the future of humanitarian needs. Embedded in law and policy, social and political inequality is increasingly driving instability and conflict across the globe as the gap widens between elites gaining and holding on to power and the priorities of their citizens. At the same time, national laws, institutions and practices are increasingly perpetuating systemic inequality, which is culminating in discrimination and state-sanctioned violence against marginalized groups and communities. Increasing inequality is a key threat to the achievement of the Sustainable

Inequality was voted as the emerging trend most impacting the future of humanitarian action.





Development Goals, and without concerted and dedicated efforts to reduce it, millions of people will be left behind.

This has several implications for humanitarians. One is the need to be conscious of the economic, political and social inequalities in the contexts in which they operate. This is essential to understanding emerging pockets of vulnerability and need, as well as identifying particularly vulnerable communities and ensuring they are not excluded from assistance and protection. It also entails a more nuanced approach to ensure that humanitarians deliver assistance in a manner that addresses inequality rather than exacerbates it, and that both public and private advocacy are appropriate and sensitive. At the same time, humanitarian organizations should be aware of the inequalities and power differences that exist *within* the humanitarian system that can favour which agencies are financed, given decision-making power, and ability to deliver on the ground.

If inequalities continue to rise based on current trajectories, humanitarian organizations will need to adapt their responses. International humanitarian organizations and donors should prioritize collaboration and innovation over siloed pursuits of traditional mandates, such as strengthening local organizations. Drastic changes are still required to shift harmful

narratives and to move towards treating people who receive humanitarian aid as first responders to be empowered and clients to be served rather than as “helpless victims”.

**“ Systemic inequality continues to rise in the face of global wealth and development, exacerbating needs and vulnerabilities, and rendering response increasingly difficult for humanitarian actors on the ground. ”**







## 4 Accelerating Impacts of Climate Change

The climate crisis will shape almost every aspect of humanitarian response over the next decade. This includes more frequent, intense and geographically diverse weather events, such as hurricanes, droughts and wildfires; the increased risk and spread of disease; mass displacement, some of it permanent; and the loss of biodiversity and food security. The impacts of climate change are wide-ranging, intersecting and, for the most vulnerable, catastrophic. While the UN estimates that the number of people in need of international humanitarian assistance due to climate change and conflict will soar to 200 million by 2022, the full implications of climate change on the most vulnerable are not known because of its complexity and interconnected nature.

To prepare for what lies ahead, humanitarian organizations will need to improve their literacy of climate science, emerging risks, and the implications of further global warming for the most vulnerable. A better understanding of how climate intersects with other political, economic, development and demographic trends to create or exacerbate vulnerability will also be necessary. For example, increasing levels of debt in many sub-Saharan African countries threatens their ability to prepare for, adapt and recover from climatic shocks. New skills and operating models may be required to address emerging risks, including heatwaves in cities, coastal flooding in urban areas, wide-scale health outbreaks in new locations, and climatic events in conflict areas.



Humanitarian organizations will also need to become more flexible, constantly readjusting priorities and making difficult decisions about who and where they are able to serve. Increasing investment in local organizations and health systems, and better and more consistent use of predictive analytics for early financing and action, are some of the measures to reduce humanitarian needs that result from climate-related disasters and ensuring a timely and effective response.



a move towards becoming carbon neutral. This will involve taking new approaches to environmental sustainability. Issues to consider include production of waste, increased pressure on natural resources such as wood and water, and greenhouse gas emissions due to the transportation of people and equipment.

With 11 of the 20 countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change having a UN-coordinated international humanitarian appeal for the past seven years (2013–2019), humanitarian organizations also have a responsibility to do their part to reduce people’s vulnerability. This includes improving joint risk analysis as well as planning with development agencies. This requires stronger humanitarian-development collaboration, including tracking outcomes that are central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Humanitarian organizations will also need to scale-up advocacy efforts and collaboration with development partners to ensure countries and communities most vulnerable to climatic shocks, particularly in fragile settings, are able to access adaptation finance and programs.

Humanitarian organizations should also “walk the talk” by reviewing their own carbon footprints, with

The climate crisis will require monumental and urgent action by States, businesses, the banking and insurance sectors, and development organizations and societies to avoid the most severe consequences. Humanitarian organizations should strengthen their understanding of broader climate discussions – political processes, economic initiatives and impacts, and adaptation and mitigation negotiations – to be strong and effective advocates for the those furthest behind and to identify opportunities to prepare for the challenges ahead.

**“ Climate change is a top priority area that calls for more attention, resources, change of mindsets, reinvigorated systems, and a major scale-up in our collective efforts with partners across the globe. ”**



# 5 New Technologies Shaping a Digital Divide and the Character of Warfare

Advancements in new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, blockchain, the ‘internet of things’,<sup>1</sup> mixed reality<sup>2</sup> and 3D printing are revolutionizing the technological space. At the same time, new and emerging technologies are increasingly informing the nature of humanitarian response, bringing both new opportunities as well as novel challenges and risks.

Rapid technological change has increased and accelerated the flow and availability of data. An ever-increasing number of humanitarian projects are also using digital data collection, analysis and dissemination to better support their operations. Data literacy, however, has long been a challenge for humanitarian organizations, and more training and cross-sectoral collaboration are needed to adapt the humanitarian space to modern digital realities. While digitization can improve humanitarian action through better needs assessment, response planning and aid delivery it may also reinforce existing inequalities and socioeconomic tensions. The differences in the access to, and use of, technology across gender, racial and socioeconomic lines often creates digital divides, which further exacerbate inequality.

1 The concept of connecting any device with an on-off switch to the internet.

2 Mixed reality is another name for augmented reality, which merges the real and virtual world using virtual technology. Mixed reality does not exclusively take place in either the physical or virtual world, but is a hybrid reality and virtual reality.

**“ Regulation will determine much of the accessibility of technology in the future. ”**

New and emerging technologies have also transformed the military and security space and could change the character of warfare. For instance, cyber operations and autonomous or semi-autonomous weapons systems are transforming the military and security sector. In the past, only a select few actors had the capability to use these technologies, but they will come in the hands of a greater number of both violent State and non-State actors.

Furthermore, humanitarian organizations’ capacity to collect data is outpacing the development of legal and ethical frameworks to protect these data. Shared data protection, data responsibility and data privacy frameworks are needed to protect vulnerable populations against protection threats resulting from data and privacy breaches.

Humanitarian organizations will need to further deepen their engagement with technology and finance partners to properly leverage emerging technologies in the humanitarian operating environment. At the same time, humanitarian organizations will need to strengthen engagement with multilateral institutions to ensure that no one is left behind in the fourth industrial revolution.



## 6 The Spread of Infectious Diseases

The prevalence and severity of disease outbreak will continue to pose a growing threat to millions of people, especially those most in need of critical humanitarian assistance over the next decade. In the past decade, the globe has witnessed an increase in disease outbreaks, seeing an average growth of 6.9% annually.<sup>3</sup> Ebola, SARS, MERS, Influenza (H1N1), Zika virus, Malaria, Cholera, and, most recently, COVID-19 have spread at unprecedented rates. Together they have had immense impacts on public health resources, economic systems, and, above all, people's survival.

Disease outbreaks are worsening humanitarian needs in some of the world's most dire emergencies, heightening the need for resources, strengthened health systems, and demanding increasingly complex responses from humanitarian actors on the ground. Out of the 32 countries with an inter-agency humanitarian appeal over the past five years, 30 countries (or 94%) recorded at least one disease outbreak.<sup>4</sup> Further, the spread of infectious disease among people most severely affected by humanitarian crises can leave acute and long-term ancillary health impacts.

The anticipated increase in the severity and frequency of climatic events, protracted conflict, and hyper-urbanization are expected



to increase the spread of infectious diseases in the most vulnerable countries. Warmer ambient temperatures, such as those associated with climate change, have been shown to increase the incidence and spread of water- and food-borne infectious diseases, while also exacerbating the spread of disease vectors, such as mosquitos, bats, and ticks.<sup>5</sup> Recent spikes in malaria, for example, have been observed in sub-Saharan Africa, a region that has witnessed massive climatic variation in terms of temperature and precipitation.<sup>6</sup>

3 Elsevier (2020), Global Research Trends in Infectious Disease

4 WHO, Global Health Observatory, Health Emergencies

5 Lancet Countdown and Medecins Sans Frontiers (2018), Climate Change and Health: an urgent new frontier for humanitarianism

6 Medecins Sans Frontiers (2017), International Activity Report

The accelerating spread of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, pose tremendous implications for all parts of society and thus demand a diverse, multifaceted, whole-of-government, and multilateral approach. In the face of heightened travel and border restrictions, humanitarian actors must continue to be granted access to populations in need to ensure that the most vulnerable are not left behind and have access to essential health care. Attacks against health care workers and facilities must stop. States must resist the urge to retreat from multilateral cooperation and approaches and adopt protectionist policies. Only through a multilateral response can the spread of infectious disease be curbed, and corresponding humanitarian and socio-economic impacts be mitigated. Scaling up vaccination programs, access to clean water and sanitation while investing in local health care systems, and the protection of frontline health-care facilities and workers is critical to reduce the current caseloads and manage future risks.

The ability of countries to prevent and effectively respond to pandemics and epidemics will ultimately depend on how advanced they are in meeting the

Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. With more robust health systems, fewer people living in extreme poverty, less gender equality, and a healthier natural environment, there will be more resilient communities. The international community must seize the COVID-19 crisis, to make progress on international development and climate goals to prevent the catastrophic impacts of infectious diseases in the future.

**“ Multilateralism is fundamentally critical to pandemic response. ”**



# Agenda

## 2019 Global Humanitarian Policy Forum



### Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, New York

9:00AM-09:30AM

#### ARRIVAL AND CHECK-IN

*Light breakfast available*

9:30AM-9:45AM

#### WELCOME AND OPENING BY UNOCHA AND UN FOUNDATION

Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, UNOCHA

Ms. Sofia Borges, Senior Vice President and Head of the New York Office, UN Foundation

9:45AM-9:50AM

#### INTRODUCE OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT OF THE GHPF

Facilitator: Mr. Rajesh Mirchandani, Chief Communications Officer, UN Foundation

9:50AM-10:30AM

#### TEDx PRESENTATIONS:

*How the world is changing – different perspectives*

**Ms. Jacqueline Corbelli**, Founder, Chairman, CEO, BrightLine

**Ms. Anna Ekeledo**, Executive Director, AfriLabs

**Mr. John Norris**, Deputy Director, Policy and Strategic Insight, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

10:30AM-12:20PM

#### SESSION 1: *What changes do we see in the geo-political, societal and economic landscape?*

Facilitator: Mr. Rajesh Mirchandani, Chief Communications Officer, UN Foundation

10:35AM-11:35AM

Roundtable dialogues\*

11:35AM-12:20PM

Plenary discussion

12:20PM-1:20PM

#### Lunch





**1:20PM-1:30PM**

**TEDx PRESENTATION:**

**Mr. Raj Kumar**, Founding President and Editor-in-Chief of DEVEX

**1:30PM-3:15PM**

**SESSION 2: *How will climate interact with other emerging global trends to shape the future of humanitarian action?***

Facilitator: Mr. Rajesh Mirchandani, Chief Communications Officer, UN Foundation

1:30PM-1:40PM

Ignite Talks:

**Dr. Erin Coughlan de Perez**, Manager, Climate Science, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre

**Ms. Fouzia Mohamed Ali**, Director of Operations, GREDO, Somalia

1:40PM-2:40PM

Scenario-based discussion\*

2:40PM-3:15PM

Plenary discussion

**3:15PM-3:30PM**

**Coffee break**

**3:30PM-4:30PM**

**SESSION 3: *The transforming potential and the evolving fears of technology – A fishbowl discussion***

Facilitator: Mr. Rajesh Mirchandani, Chief Communications Officer, UN Foundation

3:30PM-3:45PM

Fishbowl Ignite Talks:

**Mr. John Amble**, Editorial Director and Co-Director of the Urban Warfare Project, Modern War Institute, WestPoint

**Ms. Dara Dotz**, Co-Founder, Field Ready

3:45PM-4:30PM

Fishbowl discussion

**4:30PM-5:00PM**

**Wrap-up and closing**

**5:00PM-6:00PM**

**Cocktail hour**



## **OPENING TEDx PRESENTATIONS**

The GHPF featured presentations from 4 leaders from different disciplines who shared their perspectives on how the world will change between 2020-2030. The TEDx-style presentations set the scene for the rest of the forum, which was dedicated to exploring the global trends that will shape the humanitarian operating environment over the next decade.

## **IGNITE TALKS**

Participants from different disciplines and organizations were pre-selected to present a 3-minute ignite talk on a particular theme. Similar to the opening presentations, the ignite talks shared visions of how the world is changing while sparking ideas and giving food for thought as participants entered into the roundtable dialogues and scenario-based discussions.

## **ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES**

The roundtable dialogues allowed participants in small groups to freely exchange their perspectives on what political, economic and social trends they see emerging and the impact they may have on the humanitarian operating environment over the next decade. The facilitator assisted the dialogue with guiding questions.

## **SCENARIO-BASED DISCUSSION**

Participants in small groups explored how different global trends will interact with climate change and the potential impact for humanitarian action over the next decade. The scenario-based discussions were not designed to make predictions, but rather serve as a 'safe place' for participants to explore the convergence of global trends and how they may impact the future of humanitarian action.

## **FISHBOWL DISCUSSION**

Participants were invited to engage in a facilitated fishbowl discussion. The session kicked-off with two ignite talks inside the fishbowl, followed by participant engagement. Participants were asked to enter the fishbowl to ask a question, build on, or challenge other participants' ideas as the Forum explored the transforming potential and evolving fears of technology for people in crisis.

## **PLENARY SESSIONS**

Short facilitated plenary sessions drew out the key/ common trends raised by participants throughout the day while capturing the questions and considerations for humanitarians to explore further.





# Speaker Biographies

## **Jacqueline Corbelli** Co-Founder, Chairman & CEO, *BrightLine*



Jacqueline Corbelli is Founder, Chairman and CEO of New York City tech start-up, Brightline. She is at the forefront of redefining

models permanently changed by new trends in TV viewer behavior. BrightLine is the recognized market leader and de facto standard for building and delivering interactive video ad solutions across the entire IP-delivered TV landscape.

Jacqueline was the Chairman of the Board of the Millennium Promise Alliance (2005-2015) and continues to serve on the Board of Directors. Jacqueline is extensively involved in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, where she sits on the Board of the SDG Center of Africa and is a Leadership Council Member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. She is also a Governor the New York Academy of Sciences and a founding member of Pope Francis' Ethics in Action Forum.

## **Anna Ekeledo** Executive Director, *AfriLabs*



Anna is the Executive Director of AfriLabs, a network organization of over 158 Technology and Innovation Hubs across

45 African countries; leading the organization to develop programs and build partnerships that support and work with these innovation hubs and other stakeholders to raise high potential entrepreneurs that will stimulate economic growth and social development in Africa.

Her focus at AfriLabs aligns with its vision of an African continent characterized by open collaboration, African made solutions and jobs for all driven by technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

## **Raj Kumar**

President & Editor-in-Chief,  
*Devex*



Raj Kumar is the founding President and Editor-in-Chief at Devex, the media platform for the global development community.

He is a media leader and former humanitarian council chair for the World Economic Forum and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. His work has led him to more than 50 countries, where he has had the honor to meet many of the aid workers and development professionals who make up the Devex community.

He is the author of the book, “The Business of Changing the World”, a go-to primer on the ideas, people, and technology disrupting the aid industry.

## **John Norris**

Deputy Director for Policy &  
Strategic Insight,  
*Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*



John Norris is the Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Insight at the Gates Foundation, where his work focuses

on emerging trends most likely to impact the foundation’s programs. John has served in a number of senior roles in government, international institutions, and non-profits. In 2014, John was appointed by President Barack Obama to the President’s Global Development Council, a body charged with advising the administration on effective development practices.

John is the author of several books, including a biography of the late journalist Mary McGrory which was a finalist for the LA Times Book Prize.



