

GLOBAL RELIGIOUS FORUM OF THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT WORKING MEETING

**Thursday, 17th December 2015, World Vision offices Nairobi,
Kenya**

Meeting overview

Faith-based humanitarian organisations and FBO consortiums met in Nairobi in person while a representative from WHS joined the meeting via a Webex call to discuss about the upcoming Global summit of WHS and what opportunities FBOs will bring on the table after looking through the opportunities and challenges.

The organizations representatives were welcomed to the meeting venue by the host organization at the World Vision complex in Nairobi. The Director, Integrated Programs and Strategy, Mesfin Loha did the welcome note and the opening remarks. He encouraged the present faith based organizations to not only focus on the agenda for the day but look toward working together and moving humanitarian issues towards action.

There was a brief introduction and explanation of the objectives of the Global Religious Forum of the World Humanitarian Summit by Beris Gwynne who is part of the WHS Steering Committee. Among other things, she explained that the focus of WHS is to facilitate a process of engagement and gathering evidence on the work that is done by faith groups, the value addition, how we behave as the people of faith and the effects it has in the overall humanitarian work since this evidence is important in the contribution of the conversations going forward in the humanitarian industry. The pre working meeting in Nairobi would then help to articulate clearly specific issues that the FBOs bring on the table uniquely and can provide leadership on those specific issues.

After the brief presentation outlining the GRF concept note participants were given a chance to react to the issues that were raised in the presentation and later broke into small groups to discuss on three fundamental questions that focused on evidence based and the practical challenges and opportunities of working with local faith-based partners. From these discussions, participants shared experiences and identified key issues for discussion at the WHS GRF. This report provides a summary of that discussion.

Reflections and questions from Participants:

- The members expressed a hope that this whole process of the Global Summit of the WHS is going to profile the FBOS better among the humanitarian industry
- What are the FBOs bringing new to the Forum?
- What are the FBOs ready to compromise (not on beliefs fundamentals) but on principles, views and other parameters so that we can address particular issues that are of concern to all of us?

- Most organizations don't take time to really gather correct information that truly represents the issues of our constituencies. How much do we refer to the will and aspirations of the people we claim to represent e.g. the youth agenda is forgotten in most institutions and thus a recipe for conflict. Thus issue of the youth need to deliberate on them and given greater focus
- Faith groups should focus on respect on humanity which is getting eroded day by day due to conflict around the world that cannot just be attributed to the religion.
- Faith organizations can use the advantage of the critical mass it has to influence response to these issues positively
- Religion tends to teach about respect, love and value for one another. This is a unique attribute that faith based organizations can bring to the table
- The motivation of our belief drives our work and the fact that we have a base of believers is an added advantage. FBOs therefore can equip believers to respond to humanitarian issues more professionally
- The volunteer base that the FBOs can be able to rally is enormous based on the number of believers that are around the world
- On the issues of the youth and radicalization, it has a lot to do with a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. Faith organizations are able to help the youth find both in a more constructive way.
- The religious leaders have the moral authority and as gate keepers in the communities
- The religious community have the ability to create hope in communities through psychosocial support, trauma counselling
- Africa continent is a religious continent and any development facet should have a religious face
- Religious people have been able to spearhead every facet of development in history
- The essence of faith drives us action
- FBOs should contribute to influence generation to ensure that this does not happen again
- As FBOs should have credible evidence of what we have been able to do
- The faith community automatically wants to respond when there are issues but it will be good to build their capacity to respond better
- In summary the participants agreed that communities will focus specifically on:
 - The area of humanity that religion offers to address conflict based on radicalization
 - The enormous constituency that faith organizations are able to easily influence
 - And commit to narrow down to the sector of humanity we should serve which boiled down to children and the youth because

Responses by the GFR representative to the questions raised

- GRF intends that the contribution of the faith communities can be more visible and hence give FBOs a have a much higher profile
- The process of consultation towards the GRF intends to help a shift of how FBOs work together. The consultations have already started influencing how FBOs work together especially in Geneva and we should be intentional in working together going forward.
- Faith Organizations have an obligation to explain to non-believers/ secular organizations what we bring to the table. Faith Organizations usually talk about witness that is not well understood by secular organizations. There is an obligation to respond in a world that is currently deteriorating by working together

- GFR intend to influence on how the international system, local governments and other NGOs work with the local faith communities because currently they tend to side line them.

Identification of priority areas for WHS GRF: Value Add

- Check on the root of radicalizations and extremism and conversions. Both religious and ethnic radicalization. Focusing on conflict
- We have the moral authority to influence the masses
- Focus on the Software of humanitarian world because religious people view humanity as God's creation. The idea of creating hope through counselling, psychosocial support, prayer, encouragement, trauma counselling that help people go through is a strength that FBOs can maximise on
- Ensure we don't limit the working group for being a Kenyan one. Africa is a religious continent and there is no facet that we do that is not connected to religion.
- Religious people have led the humanitarian support in all its facets historically from their own resources. This cannot be ignored, rather it can be encouraged and utilized better
- The issue of comprise among faith organization partnership has to be defined. FBOs should not compromise the essence of their faith but can work together in development work
- Admit the use and misuse of religion so that we can start to solve the problem
- We should not justify the youth radicalization and issue of conversions being points of radicalization.
- The current state of our continent requires resolving, repairing and reconstructing
- We have huge grassroots presence and when there is a crisis there is what and how the communities of faith respond. How we respond can bring peace and aggravate conflict or create harmony and build better relationships
- There is need to focus on peacebuilding because if we don't, the work we do in development will go to waste
- The issue of professionalism in response is key to reduce misunderstandings and misconceptions. Professionals from the Faith Organizations should work with faith leaders to build their capacity in better humanitarian response. Training the religious leaders can have ripple effects since they have the opportunity to meet with the masses regularly and in numbers. An advantage that no other institution has.
- We can engage in alliances of religious bodies and the pockets of alliances to get data of two to 3 things that we can focus
- Ensure that FBOs are viewed as equals in the development work and not looked down upon. In this case, there has to be an issue that brings us together
- The religious body should think of how to contribute in raising a generation that will be better in future and will no longer propagate conflict
- As FBOs we must mobilise evidence to present our case. We need to ask where the evidence lies so that we can collect it and share it well
- What is the signature of what we do that will set us apart? Our motivation of why we do what we do is a big issue. How does this improve our response?

Small Group Discussions and responses

Group 1

Examples of operation of partnerships

- Act Alliance- They have been able to mobilize one another around climate change issues and joint appeals on national disasters
- Supkem – Have been able to work around conflict resolution in the Tana River and have also been able to mobilize Muslim companies to contribute to relief efforts as well as working with Muslim and non Muslim Organizations

Challenges

- Compromising issues such as processes and procedures, ethos and genuine representation of the constituents
- Sometimes the communities have not trusted the authenticity of the interventions being non partial
- Lack of capacity to engage by faith community and working with faith groups and communities is always an afterthought

Key issues around partnership

- Need to strengthen the linkage between constituents and FBOs
- Need to strengthen the linkage between the FBOs and other sectors
- There is need to engage as equals and recognition of the value of what each brings on the table by both the FBOs and the secular organizations

How the one day forum can best support these practical partnership goals

- We would like to see a continuation of the validation of the value of the FBOs in the humanitarian space
- Identify key areas of partnership and build on areas we can work together as both FBOs and Secular organizations

Group 2

Examples of operation of partnerships

- ADRA- Mobilized churches and traditional leaders to create awareness and fight against cholera outbreak
- SUPKEM- Mobilized support from faith groups during the constitutional review i.e. the ufungamano
- World Vision- Mobilized churches to influence people to be influencers of peace

Challenges

- Faith groups usually lack capacity and ill preparation when a disaster or conflict strikes therefore people start very fast to engage without proper capacity
- There are cases of lack of trust sometimes between Muslims and Christians
- Dependency. Some will see the need refuse to engage due to lack of money or view that the issue is bigger than their ability to intervene leaving it for others to respond

Opportunities

- Disasters have been uniting factors because the different faith groups are affected equally
- Respect for humanity and elevating humanity in all areas

How the one day forum can best support these practical partnership goals

- There must be a physical representation of all voices
- The representatives must present credible reports
- They must lobby for representation and participation
- Must lobby for resources

Group 3

Examples of operation of partnerships

- Evangelical Alliance of Africa- Has a development and relief commission that mainly works in North Uganda. They have been able to support local communities to be able to provide psychosocial support
- Christian Impact Missions: They are focusing to work with all people for self-reliance
- Save Life International
- PROCMURA- Work with Muslims towards peaceful co-existence and accepting and respecting differences

Challenges

- Some faith organizations have no a clear articulated World View on issues that affect humanity in general

How the one day forum can best support these practical partnership goals

- Develop a theology of humanity based on the different religions
- Constructive engagements with communities

Next Steps

- To capture the proceedings and share with the steering team in Geneva as part of our contribution for that meeting
- Have African representative at the GRF meeting in the May meeting as African issues are unique and the authenticity of what will be contributed will come from the grassroots

- This network will be kept to engage and when a representative will be nominated from the same group

Annex 1

Meeting Participants

	Name	Organization
1	Jim Olang	AEA
2	Bishop Titus Masika	Christian Impact Mission
3	Christopher Hoffman	World Vision
4	Daniel Muvengi	World Vision
5	Dr. Johnson Mbillah	Procmura
6	Fedis Nyagah Mwai	CAPA
7	Gezaheng K. Gebrehana	ACT Alliance- Africa
8	Halima Ali	Miritini Jmii Rescue Team
9	Hassan Abdullahi Roble	Save Lives International
10	Hassan Kinyua Omari	Supkem/ UON
11	Ibrahim Asmani Lethome	Supkem/ BRAVE
12	John Mwangi	World Vision
13	Joseph Mayala	Compassion International
14	June Nderitu	CAPA
15	Lilian Njoki	World Vision
16	Mesfin Loha	World Vision
17	Nelly Maina	World Vision
18	Sheikh Ibrahim Hussein	Upendo Jomvu Interfaith Org
19	Zivayi Nengomasha	ADRA

Annex 2

Agenda & small group questions

Agenda

Working Meeting on WHS GRF – hosted at World Vision East Africa Regional Office Complex, Karen, Dec 17 th 2015 Moderator: Dr. Daniel Muvengi	
10:00 – Welcome and introductions 10:15- Opening Remarks: Faith engagement in Humanitarian Response	Moderator Dr. Mesfin Loha- WV EAR
10:30 – Introduction of the Global Religious Forum of the World Humanitarian Summit	Beris Gwynne WHS Steering Committee
11:00 – Evidence base for faith groups in humanitarian action	Helen Stawski, Partnership for Faith & Development/Beris Gwynne

11:20 – Framing the Discussion: How can the GRF advance full engagement of faith networks in humanitarian action?	Beris Gwynne
11.25 – Small Group Discussion	Christopher Hofmann
11:50 – Recommendations regarding WHS GRF	Christopher Hofmann
12:30 – Close & Lunch	All

Small Group Questions

- 1) Take a few minutes to each share an example of an operational partnership your organisation has had with a local or national faith-based organisation or religious leader or religious group. Please explain where FBOs added value, or presented challenges to partnership, due to their unique identity, values and practices.
- 2) Based on the examples shared which areas are most important for strengthening understanding and partnerships between faith-based/religiously-inspired humanitarian actors and the wider humanitarian sector (prioritising areas where FBOs add value due to their unique identity, values and practices)?
- 3) How can the proposed one day Global Religious Forum at the WHS best support these practical partnership goals?

Plenary discussion

- 1) Feedback on questions 2 & 3
- 2) What kinds of outputs would be useful? For example public declarations, capacity building resources, training.
- 3) How should the GRF's priority areas and objectives connect to the WHS's priority areas?
- 4) For those involved in the WHS regional consultations – in what ways was the issue of faith and religion discussed?
- 5) Which groups of stakeholders should be prioritised as invitees to the GRF at the WHS (local FBOs, religious leaders, international FBOs, secular agencies, academics, governments)?