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First World Humanitarian Summit: African Union is going to Istanbul with its own commitments to the continent and its people

The key concerns that the AU will be raising in the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit include the need for redefining the international humanitarian system...

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 19 May 2016 – The Head of the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons Division in the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission (AUC), Mr. Olabisi Dare, highlights the participation of the AU at the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit scheduled to take place on 23 -24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey, during an interview granted to the Directorate of Information and Communication of the AUC, ahead of the event.



According to Mr. Olabisi, the key concerns that the AU will be raising in the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit include the need for redefining the international humanitarian system which includes a reconfiguration of the entire system, “it being understood that the existing system predicated on Resolution 46 182 is not being faithfully implemented”. It is therefore in respect of this that the African Union is going to Istanbul with its own commitments to the continent

and its people and has formulated a [Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness](#). One of the key things the commitment will anchor upon is on the primacy of the state, noting that the state has the primary responsibility to its own people - to satisfy their needs and take care of their vulnerabilities.

Mr. Olabisi explained that the African Union feels the state has to play the primary role of coordinating any and all humanitarian action that may take place within its territory. The state has a responsibility to guarantee the safety of both the humanitarian workers and humanitarian infrastructure and must alleviate the needs of its people, as well as maintain humanitarian space. “We note that the state has the capability and capacity in

key areas such as the use of military assets in assisting humanitarian action. An example is the use of military forces in Liberia where the military was deployed to serve as the first line of defense to combat the spread of Ebola. We can't overemphasize the role of the state in ensuring that humanitarian action and relief is dispensed in an effective manner and we see that this in itself will give effect to humanitarian action more readily on the continent" Mr. Olabisi further explained.



COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS



Mr. Olabisi indicated that, the African Union will make proposals for the reconfiguration of the International Humanitarian systems during the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). "We recognize that part of the solutions is the need for governments to play the primary role and a greater coordination role in order to fulfill the attributes of state in terms of its predictive nature and responsive nature and other attributes and this in itself is in of the key recommendations we are taking to the WHS as part of what Africa has committed itself to doing. We are hopeful that these recommendations will feature prominently in the outcomes". He emphasized.

Mr. Olabisi underlined that the AU is calling for the re-engineering of Resolution 46182 to reflect Africa's views, and the need to elevate the role of the state primarily to deliver to its people.

"When you look at the Common Africa Position (CAP) you find out that the first pillar speaks to the privacy of the state while all the other 9 pillars speak the same in one form or the other" , he noted.

Mr. Olabisi said Africa will be calling for increased domestic and innovative resource mobilization in order to deliver and allocate more resources to humanitarian action. He further noted that, Africa is of course also cognizant of the dwindling resources from traditional donors and moreso, the bleeding of resources from Africa in the form of illicit financial flows and the like.

With regards to the outcome of the WHS, Mr. Olabisi mentioned that, Africa's commitments goes beyond the WHS "but the summit give us an opportunity to discuss a paradigm shift in terms of the way we do things in the humanitarian field in Africa and to see that we can positively add to the mitigation and alleviation the sufferings of our



people when disasters and displacements occur”. He concluded that “our resolve is to emerge with an outcome that is workable, pragmatic, and empowering. Africa has resolved nonetheless to begin to addressing its own problems using African solutions to African problems”.

Media contact:

Esther Azaa Tankou | Ag. Director of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: Yamboue@african-union.org | Tel: +251 911361185 Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@african-union.org | Website: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

For further information:

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@african-union.org | Website: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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