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people ately need humanitarian assistance than at any time since the founding of the United Nations. More warring parties are brazenly

violating international humanitarian law. More resources than ever are needed to meet sharply escalating humanitarian needs. Yet we face the largest-ever funding shortfalls.

For these reasons and more, I am convening the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit on May 23 and 24 in Istanbul. I am urging global leaders, international organisations and others to commit to deliver more and better for those in greatest need. There is no time to lose.

Climate change is affecting lives and livelihoods across our fragile planet. Brutal and seemingly intractable conflicts, violent extremism, transnational crime and growing inequality are devastating the lives of millions of men, women and children and are destabilising entire regions. More people have been forced to flee their homes than at any time since the Second World War.

Around the world, more than 125 million people need humanitarian assistance. If they were all in one country, it would be the eleventh largest nation on earth, and one of the fastest growing.

Today's complex challenges cross borders. No single country or



organisation can address them alone. We need to restore trust in the ability of our national, regional and international institutions to confront these challenges.

A sense of shared humanity must shape our politics and drive financial decisions. In advance of the Summit, I have set out an Agenda for Humanity as a framework for action, change and mutual accountability. It has five core responsibilities.

First, leaders must intensify efforts to find political solutions to prevent and end conflict. The enormous human and economic cost makes conflict the biggest obstacle to human development. We must move from managing crises to preventing them.

Second, countries must uphold the norms that safeguard humanity. This means complying with international humanitarian and human rights law, and stopping the bombing and shelling of civilian targets and areas. It also means committing to national and international justice and ending impunity. Third, we must leave no one

behind - and we must reach those who are furthest behind, first. This means transforming the lives of the most vulnerable, including those living in conflict and in chronic poverty, and those living with the risk of natural hazards and rising sea

levels. We must reduce forced displacement, provide more regular and lawful opportunities for migration, empower women and girls and ensure quality education for all. We cannot meet the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed by world leaders last September, if we do not reach these people.

The fourth core responsibility is to move from delivering aid to ending need. We need to close the humanitarian-development divide for good. We must also anticipate crises, not wait for them to happen. We must strengthen local leadership and capacity, reduce vulnerability, and increase the resilience of people and communities, who will always be the first and last responders in crises.

Fifth, we must find smart and innovative ways of mobilising funds. This will require diversifying and expanding the resource base and using a wider variety of financing tools. I have proposed a new international financing platform with the World Bank to identify mechanisms to finance our response to protracted crises.

The Agenda for Humanity provides key actions and strategic shifts which the world requires to reduce humanitarian needs and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I urge world leaders to come to the World Humanitarian Summit committed to promote sustainable human progress and a life of dignity and security for all.

The writer is Secretary-General of the United Nations. This op-ed was part of the report, "One Humanity: Shared Responsibility", presented recently to the General Assembly for the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in May.

Why gender sensitivity is still the call for the day

Dibarah Mahboob

Bangladesh has made significant progress in improving gender parity and participation of women in the economic and political spheres. Studies, such as the International Socia Progress Imperative, attest to Bangladesh's superior positioning in South Asia, as it scored better than its neighbouring giant, India, in the year 2014 (India was placed 102nd while Bangladesh was 99th).

VER the last few years,

While greater participation of women in the workforce is increasing, it is an ironic reality that women are often treated with derision and harassed when they try to earn a livelihood for their families. Thus, the hurtful hypocrisy of our patriarchal society still persists when women step out of their houses to work for themselves or their families.

The recent industrial disasters in the RMG sector, where a large majority of workers are women, highlight some serious concerns. The percentage of women victims affected alone raise concerns, and yet current labour laws and disaster management units do not reflect the dire need to sensitise workers about the safety and occupational health concerns of women separately. "During the Rana Plaza debacle, one of the biggest problems we faced was finding female volunteers to cater to the gender-specific needs of the women victims," explains Kausik Das from UN Women. When women face social barriers to engage in professions directly linked to helping other women it's a sign that things need to change.

There is a noticeable correlation between women not getting protection, and being engaged in spaces outside the domain of what is considered the "right place" for them. Women who opt to work in garment factories, instead of working as a domestic help or getting married, are often viewed as women of "loose character." In fact, this is the case for all working women, be it RMG

workers, or women who brave harassment, exploitation and threats as journalists, photographers or field researchers.

Women are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment and vulnerable employment, and a large part of this vulnerability stems from inheriting a social culture that prizes women's sacrifice of agency. For instance, even if a woman is the sole earner of a household unit, the husband or father makes her decisions, thereby determining the extent of barriers she faces at home to retain her job. Women farmers are rarely seen using agricultural technology that reduces physical drudgery, as used by their male counterparts, let alone be land owners. When their husbands find jobs in cities, these women usually cannot hold onto the same amount of land under cultivation because of pressure from their extended families, in-laws and local hoodlums. They are exploited through different means; their lands are either grabbed or they are handed smaller plots -- meaning lower productivity and smaller yields.

Migration in search of livelihood options is a common occurrence in Bangladesh. The country has retained eighth position since 2013 (according to a World Bank report) for remittance earnings. Whether migration is internal or external, or for short or long periods, it is overwhelmingly the male members of the family who migrate while women and children are usually left behind, to face various difficulties under a legal system that offers little to no focused protection. In many cases, no wages are sent back to the woman to support the family.

The problem is that as more men move out to cities or abroad, the more migration serves to reinforce traditional gender roles. This means that the women are expected and pressurised (by family members, in-laws, other members of society) to preserve cultural and religious norms that appear to be under attack, as they now graduate from purely household duties, learning to adapt as an earner as well. In recent years, as migration has increased in many areas due to climate change, these socio-cultural factors have lead to women being much more vulnerable than men.

Rural women often tend not to work or go outside their home if they can avoid it, due to strict regulations from religious leaders. Their ability to adapt to and cope with changes in sea levels,

uncertainty, and are often looked down upon. Thus, it is of utmost importance that social support mechanisms and adequate policy environment to protect women's rights - especially those affected by migration - is initiated on a national level through campaigns and by bringing them under a protective legal framework.

While some NGOs and multi-lateral organisation have made commendable women as the unequal social counterpart point to the conservatism that plagues the emancipation of underprivileged women.

What we need is greater gendersensitisation of policy reforms. Gender-sensitisation simply means 'inspiring modification of behaviour by raising awareness of concerns regarding gender'. To begin with, the scope and reach of the Ministry of Women and



floods, droughts, salinisation, etc is 'gendered" by the community they live in, rather than their own skill sets. When her husband is away, her in-laws and relatives become the decisionmakers. Often it is members of their community who are perpetrators of harassment and assault. Women, whose husbands migrate, often live in high

advancements in enhancing women's livelihood on a small scale, their projects do not have the scope for meaningful, widespread change in ensuring the physical safety and financial security of women workers, or helping them to graduate from poverty in a sustainable way. The continued perception of

Children Affairs must be expanded. This will not only lead to improvement in targeted capacity building and enhance women-leadership practices, but also provide a solid lobby for robust gendersensitisation of policy reforms across all ministries.

The writer is an author and artist.

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GEORGE ORWELL English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic

Political language... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.)

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

DOWN

1 Singer Raitt

3 Notions

4 Escapade

5 Huck's friend

6 First número

8 Fine-tunes

11 Shade trees

22 Pleasant

24 Anomalies

25 Tourist's car

15 Needs oiling

19 Coffee dispensers

20 Braying animal

23 Chemist's place

7 Mocking work

9 Like hurricane weather

2 Plymouth family

ACROSS 1 Get-out-of-jail money 5 Fair 9 Israel's Meir 10 Deeply impressed

12 Beneath 13 Tourist stop 14 Moves furtively 16 "-- a Rock"

17 Sardine holders 18 Physics particles 21 "Sure thing!" 22 Hospital workers

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWER PLUM COOPS RURAL ANES ARENA OXYMORONS

TUDOR

BEETLE BAILEY

PHEW! OPEN

THAT BOX

OF ONIONS

OUTSIDE!

I HATE

THESE

SCHOOL

BOOKS.

SEE? RIGHT ON NOT THE PACKAGE. IT SAYS "OPEN HERE"

BABY BLUES



by Mort Walker

GREG+ MORG WALKER

