



CONCEPT NOTE

Businesses on the frontlines of humanitarian response: Lessons learned from Türkiye and beyond

OVERVIEW

There can no longer be any doubt that the private sector plays a critical role in disaster preparedness, humanitarian response, and early recovery. Businesses of every size are deploying their resources and expertise to support humanitarian response and improve the lives of families and children from Türkiye to Ukraine, the Horn of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and beyond.

As governments around the world confront the challenges of more frequent and severe climate-driven disasters, conflict and forced displacement, and the lingering economic effects of the pandemic, it is clear that all stakeholders in society – including the private sector – must work together.

Investing in local businesses as partners in disaster risk management contributes to building community resilience while strengthening local capacity, ownership, and leadership. Engaging local businesses as partners in humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery can also help make aid more effective and efficient and ensures that emergency relief can contribute to long-term economic development.

This high-level panel discussion at the 2023 [Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week](#) will **highlight the benefits of involving local businesses** in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery; **discuss how to address existing coordination challenges between the private sector and humanitarian organizations**; **highlight the urgency to scale up preparedness and disaster risk reduction with private sector**, and **share lessons learned from recent high-profile emergencies**, including the earthquakes in Türkiye.

DATE AND TIME

Thursday, 27 April 2023

16:00 – 17:30 Geneva (GMT+1)

LOCATION

**International Conference Center
Geneva (CICG), Plénière C**

REGISTRATION

Advance registration is required.

Please [register online here](#).

CONTACT

For more information, email
connectingbusiness@un.org.

OBJECTIVES

Participants in this session are expected to:

1. Have an honest conversation about how the humanitarian system can better engage local businesses during emergencies.
2. Leverage lessons learned from the Türkiye-Syria earthquakes and other disasters to identify opportunities and challenges for private sector partnerships that can deliver a more effective humanitarian response.
3. Develop strategies to support increased private sector engagement with the humanitarian ecosystem, including by scaling up disaster risk reduction in humanitarian action.

PARTICIPANTS

This session is open to all interested participants from the humanitarian, development, government, academic, and private sector communities. Advance registration is required and can be completed [here](#).

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 27 April

4:00 pm Welcome and opening remarks

- **Ms. Paola Albritto**, Director, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
- **Ms. Edem Wosornu**, Chief, Response Support Branch, United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- **Mr. Kareem Elbayar**, Programme Coordinator, OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBI)

4:10 pm Panel discussion: Leveraging the power of the private sector during humanitarian emergencies

- **Mr. Arda Batu**, Secretary General and Board Member, Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TÜRKONFED)
- **Dr. Kit Miyamoto**, CEO and Founder, Miyamoto International
- **Mr. Uwe Steckhan**, Chief – Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships & Advocacy, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- **Ms. Elisa Trujillo**, Director-General, National Support Center for Epidemiological Contingencies and Disasters (CENACED) and ARISE Mexico

Moderator: Ms. Virginie Mangin, Head of Editors, SWI swissinfo.ch

4:50 pm **Interactive questions and answers**

5:25 pm **Closing remarks**

- **Mr. Sahba Sobhani**, Director, Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Ms. Paola Albrito

Director, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

Ms. Paola Albrito was appointed as the Director of UNDRR in October 2022 and comes with extensive experience in supporting disaster resilience and sustainable development policies and instruments in Africa, Europe and Central Asia. Her broad expertise includes the development of policy guidance, cross-government strategy development, and high-level advocacy.

Ms. Albrito has published widely including contributing to the Cambridge University Handbook of Disaster Risk Reduction and International Law and holds a master's degree in International Relations and Political Science from the University of Turin, Italy, with her thesis research held at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, UK.



Ms. Edem Wosornu

Chief, Response Support Branch, United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Edem Wosornu leads OCHA's Response Support Branch, which is responsible for strengthening national and international disaster response through specialized services, including the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination mechanism, the International Network of Search and Rescue Advisory Group, and the Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Service.

The Branch also fosters strong operational partnerships with stakeholders, including the private sector through OCHA/UNDP's Connecting Business Initiative; and provides expertise to address the environmental dimensions of humanitarian emergencies through the UNEP/OCHA Joint Unit.



Kareem Elbayer

Programme Coordinator, Connecting Business initiative (CBI)

Kareem Elbayer is the Programme Coordinator of the Connecting Business initiative, a joint programme of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) dedicated to promoting partnerships with local businesses in support of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian response, and post-disaster recovery.

Kareem has over a decade of experience with the UN. From 2013–2016, Kareem served as a Programme Manager for UNOPS in Iraq, overseeing a portfolio of more than \$25 million in law reform and emergency humanitarian relief projects. From 2016-2018, Kareem served as Technology Partnerships Adviser to the Director of OCHA's Corporate Programmes Division, managing relationships with Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and dozens of other technology companies. From 2018-2021, Kareem was Partnerships Manager for OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data, where he was responsible for identifying, assessing and securing strategic partnerships with governments, foundations, and the private sector.

Prior to joining the UN, Kareem worked as a Legal Advisor at the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, specializing in freedom of association in the Arab world. Kareem holds a Juris Doctor and a Master's in International Affairs from the George Washington University in Washington, DC.



Mr. Arda Batu

Secretary General, Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TÜRKONFED)

Arda Batu joined TÜRKONFED in 2014 to manage, promote and advance the Confederation's strategic interests. Previously, he worked in the corporate communications firm StratejiCo and at the HB Consultancy Group. He has carried out extensive research and lectured at Yeditepe University.

Arda serves as an independent board member at Federal Mogul Izmit Piston, is on the executive board of Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM), part of the advisory board of Co-opinion, and sits on the editorial board of Turkish Policy Quarterly.

Arda studied Political Science and International Relations at Bosphorus University. He completed his internship at the European Parliament and attained his MA degree from Marmara University European Studies Institute.



Ms. Elisa Trujillo

Director General, ARISE MX

Elisa is a Mexican Architect with a specialty in Sustainable Architectural Design (Tec de Monterrey), and an M.Sc. in Infrastructure Planning (University of Stuttgart). She attended the disaster risk reduction (DRR) and Local Sustainable Development program (ITCILO) and is in the process of becoming certified by International SPHERE for Humanitarian Assistance.

Elisa has collaborated on multiple social projects with different international organizations in Mexico, Spain, and Germany. She specializes in matters related to disaster risk management (DRM), urban resilience, and climate change, as well as their relationship with poverty eradication. Currently, she serves as National Director at ARISE Mx and General Director at CENACED A.C.



Mr. Uwe Steckhan

Chief, Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships & Advocacy, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Uwe Steckhan is the Chief of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships & Advocacy in UNICEF's Private Sector Fundraising and Partnerships Division based out of Geneva, Switzerland. At UNICEF, he is responsible for the engagement with the private sector on global initiatives, public-private partnerships, as well as advocacy with business to collaborate with the private sector across income and influence.

Uwe has spent his career in the public and private sector on building, nurturing, and managing partnerships with a multitude of stakeholders.



Dr. Kit Miyamoto

CEO and Founder, Miyamoto International

Dr. Miyamoto is a world-leading expert in disaster resiliency, response and reconstruction. He provides expert engineering and policy consultation to the World Bank, USAID, UN agencies, governments and the private sector. He is a California Seismic Safety Commissioner, a Global CEO of Miyamoto International and a structural engineer.

Dr. Miyamoto has led teams of experts on dozens of response and reconstruction projects related to earthquakes around the world. He has also led critical seismic risk reduction programs and disaster risk mitigation policy work in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and El Salvador.

Dr. Miyamoto holds degrees from the Tokyo Institute of Technology and California State University. His team won the Engineering News-Record's "Best Global Project" award four times and the U.S. Presidential "E" award.



Ms. Virginie Mangin – Panel Moderator

Head of Editors, SWI Swissinfo.ch

Virginie joined swissinfo over two years ago as head of the English Department. She is now overseeing coverage of the International Geneva and multinational corporations. Prior to working with swissinfo Virginie lived for nearly 20 years in China as a foreign correspondent writing in both English and French for international media including AFP, Le Figaro, The Sunday Telegraph and website of the BBC.

Virginie holds two Master's Degrees from Université Paris-Sorbonne, a Master's in Journalism from the Celsa School of Journalism and Communication and a Master's in Contemporary History.



Mr. Sahba Sobhani

Director, Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Sahba Sobhani brings 19 years of experience in the private sector in the Silicon Valley and Singapore, and at UNDP as Programme Advisor, Team Leader, Programme Manager and as the technical lead for the recently endorsed UNDP private sector strategy. He has significant partnership development and advocacy experience with the private sector working with over 100 companies and business organizations, and a track record of operational leadership, innovation and management of 6 global UNDP-led strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives in the area of business and development, including the Business Call to Action Initiative, the Connecting Business Initiative and the G20 Global Platform on Inclusive Business. Mr. Sobhani was the managing editor of the African Stock Markets Handbook. He is a graduate of Yale University and the Fletcher School of Diplomacy (USA).

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS



OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBI)

Established and jointly managed by the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA) and the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP), CBI is dedicated to the idea that the private sector has a critical role to play in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. CBI Member Networks—independent chambers of commerce, trade federations, business associations and private foundations—are ready, willing and able to lead private sector disaster management in their countries. CBI empowers local businesses to work hand-in-hand with governments, civil society, humanitarian organizations and affected people to alleviate human suffering while building more resilient societies. Learn more at connectingbusiness.org.



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF works in the world's toughest places to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents – and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. UNICEF is renowned for its engagement and partnerships with the business sector. It has developed its public-private engagement approach to harness the untapped potential of business – their core expertise, operational capacities and networks – in order to enhance the efficiency of national humanitarian systems and to directly improve the lives of children affected by disasters. The 'Business and Community Resilience' approach involves working with businesses and business networks to ensure that the Core [Commitments for Children](#) are met in humanitarian action, and child rights are upheld with the sustainable development agenda. Learn more at <https://www.unicef.org/>.



United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

UNDRR (formerly UNISDR) was created in 1999 and is the United Nations focal point for disaster risk reduction. UNDRR oversees the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, supporting countries in its implementation, monitoring and sharing what works in reducing existing risk and preventing the creation of new risk. Learn more at <https://www.undrr.org/about-undrr>.

UNDRR facilitates the Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) with a mission to create risk-resilient societies by energising the private sector in collaboration with the public sector and other stakeholders to achieve the outcome and goal of the Sendai Framework in a transparent and inclusive way that delivers local and measurable impact. Learn more at <https://www.ariseglobalnetwork.org/>.