

**US D16.5Bln Needed For Humanitarian Assistance This Year - UN Representative
Bernama
Feb 24, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- The increasing conflicts in several countries this year has not only increased the number of vulnerable people needing to be assisted but also the cost for such assistance.

United Nations' (UN) Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said: "The crises we are facing this year, in Syria and Iraq, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Yemen, and many other countries, means that we need to raise USD16.5 billion (RM60.12 billion) this year to help the most vulnerable people in the world."

"Over 12 million people in Syria need urgent assistance and practically every Syrian is affected by the economic collapse of the country, destruction of vital infrastructure such as clinics, hospitals and schools and damage to the electricity and water supply.

"We face multiple challenges which contribute to a country's fragility and vulnerability. Population growth means that the crises are likely to persist and to get worse as people compete for space, resources and recognition," she added

Amos said this in her lecture entitled 'The Future Humanitarian Action' at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) campus, here Tuesday.

"Eighty per cent of humanitarian work is now in countries and regions affected by conflicts... so we work hard to save people's lives but the majority have little prospect of a secure future," she said.

Amos said Malaysia has contributed to international humanitarian assistance through its non-governmental organisations, where the voice of Mercy Malaysia is heard loud and clear in the International Council for Voluntary Agencies.

She said the protection of civilians was central to UN humanitarian work.

"If we bow to pressure to favour one side or another, it becomes impossible for us to do our job, and survival should not depend on which side one supports, which ethnic group one is from or what religion," she said.

Valerie said humanitarian agencies need to build longer term sustainability of communities with development partners.

"Too often, information and analysis are not shared and there is a lack of joint strategic planning," she said.

On natural disasters like tsunami, she said there is a need to persuade donors to channel their money into emergency response rather than prevention and risk management.

"Disasters affect everyone and prevention is everybody's business.

That's why it is so important not only for humanitarian agencies to plan and act, but for the business sector, government, academia, militaries and all sectors of society," she said.

"Here in Malaysia, preparedness is not the responsibility of government alone, civil society and the private sector are already involved.

"I hope the academic community will also get engaged for example through in research and gathering evidence, UTM can use its experience and knowledge-base to identify problems, innovate and find creative and innovative solutions to recurring risk," she said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

Source : <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1111509>