Joint press release by the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development on World Humanitarian Day

2013-08-19

Markus Löning, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office, issued the following statement today (19 August 2013) to mark World Humanitarian Day:

Humanitarian assistance is more important than ever before. The desperate situation of the Syrian refugees is an especially shocking example.

Humanitarian assistance alleviates the suffering of men, women and children who have been forced to leave their homes or adversely affected by natural disasters or war. Large numbers of volunteers, who defy danger to help people in need, and numerous donors are demonstrating their solidarity with the victims. I would like to express to them my special thanks today.

The German Government is one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance around the world. We support the work of German and

UN

organisations by providing funds from the federal budget. Offering shelter in Germany for refugees is part of our humanitarian work.

Hans-Jürgen Beerfeltz, the State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, issued the following statement to mark this day:

Thanks to this Government, German humanitarian assistance is provided by a single source. That is in the interest of people in need. In the case of prolonged crises, moreover, close coordination of humanitarian assistance and medium and long-term development cooperation is essential for strengthening the resilience of people, societies and institutions for future crises.

The number of people in need has risen during the last few years, for the number and scale of natural disasters is rising around the world and complex political crises are often prolonged. More than 45 million people have been displaced or fled due to conflicts or

disasters. The United Nations has estimated that the global humanitarian need in 2013 amounts to around 13 billion US dollars, an all-time high.

In November 2011, the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development concluded an interministerial agreement. This agreement facilitated cooperation between the two ministries. Since 2012, the Federal Foreign Office has been responsible for the German Government's entire humanitarian assistance abroad. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is responsible for recovery and rehabilitation and, in this context, fosters medium-term projects based on development cooperation principles. The coordination of humanitarian relief measures and development policy strategies is often vital in crisis situations.

This is currently visible in the context of the

Syria

crisis. The refugees from

Syria

have placed a great strain on the resources of neighbouring countries. As well as humanitarian assistance for those affected, the structural capacities of the countries taking in refugees have to be bolstered. How close this cooperation can be is illustrated by the modular container hospital operated by Malteser International in

Turkey

. The construction of the hospital and the training of Syrian personnel is being funded as a contribution towards the establishment of structures by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, while medical care for the Syrian refugees is financed by the Federal Foreign Office as a humanitarian component.

Info

World Humanitarian Day is on 19 August. On this day, international humanitarian assistance and its principles are the focus of attention and the volunteers who have died in the line of duty around the world are remembered. For 19 August is the anniversary of the deadly bomb attack on the

UN

headquarters in Baghdad in 2003 in which 22

UN

staff lost their lives.

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