



CONCEPT NOTE

HNPW 2025

Private Sector Welcome and Networking Event

OVERVIEW

The private sector plays a crucial role in humanitarian response, from logistics and technology to financing and modelling innovative partnerships. As humanitarian challenges grow more complex, fostering collaboration between businesses, governments, and aid organizations is essential for effective crisis response.

This interactive session, convened by OCHA's Private Sector Unit and the OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business Initiative (CBI), will bring together private sector representatives and humanitarian stakeholders. Following brief opening remarks, participants will engage in a dynamic exercise, rotating between four thematic stations covering key areas of private sector engagement in humanitarian action. Through facilitated discussions, participants will then share insights, identify challenges, and explore opportunities for collaboration. The session will conclude with an interactive reflection, clustering key takeaways and ideas to drive meaningful partnerships beyond HNPW.

DATE AND TIME

Monday, 24 March 2025
11:00 – 12:30 Geneva (UTC+1)

LOCATION

[International Conference Center Geneva \(CICG\)](#), Plénière B

REGISTRATION

Advance registration is required.
[Please register online here.](#)

CONTACT

For more information, email
connectingbusiness@un.org.

Photo credit: CBI

MEETING OBJECTIVES

1. Facilitate a structured networking opportunity for businesses, aid/development organizations, and government representatives to exchange insights, build relationships, and explore potential collaborations in humanitarian response.
2. Encourage knowledge sharing and identification of key challenges, opportunities, and best practices in areas such as logistics, digital solutions, local market engagement, and climate adaptation.
3. Capture key insights and ideas from discussions to identify concrete opportunities for strengthening private sector engagement in humanitarian action beyond HNPW.

PARTICIPANTS

This session welcomes participants from across the humanitarian and development system, private sector, government, and academia who are interested in strengthening collaboration in crisis response. By fostering an interactive and engaging environment, the session aims to facilitate networking, knowledge exchange, and the identification of opportunities for meaningful partnerships.

PROGRAMME

11:00-11:10 Welcome and Opening Remarks: Challenges and Opportunities for Public-Private Collaboration

- **Anja Nitzsche**, Chief – Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Branch, OCHA
- **David Young**, Managing Director & Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group

11:10-12:00 Networking Rotations (10 minutes per station)

- **Station 1: Logistics and Supply Chain Innovation**
- **Station 2: Digital Solutions for Crisis Response**
- **Station 3: Financing Mechanisms for Humanitarian Action**
- **Station 4: Capacity Building and Skills Development**

Moderator: Kareem Elbayar, Programme Coordinator, OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative

12:00-12:20 Networking Station Debriefs

12:20-12:30 Wrap Up and Closing Remarks

- **Sahba Sobhani**, Director, UNDP Istanbul Centre for Private Sector in Development
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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Anja Nitzsche

Chief – Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Branch, OCHA

Anja Nitzsche was appointed Chief of the Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Branch for the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in March 2021. Anja has more than 25 years of professional experience working in international development, resource mobilization, strategic partnerships and communications, with a strong focus on global health, gender, monitoring & evaluation and innovative financing.

From 2015-2021, she served as the Head of Resource Mobilization and Strategic Partnerships at the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), based in Vienna. Before joining IAEA, Anja was Division Chief of Global Financing Mechanisms and Partner Collaboration at UNAIDS, Geneva. From 2004-2008, she worked as Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor at the UNAIDS Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Moscow, Russian Federation. She has also worked with the European Commission and has served in long-term positions in several countries in Eastern Europe and South East Asia.



David Young

Managing Director & Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group

Dave Young returned to Boston Consulting Group in April 2016, where he leads BCG's total societal impact and sustainability work globally and is a BCG Henderson Institute Fellow. Dave works closely with the leaders of the Social Impact practice to assist clients with efforts at the intersection of social impact, the firm's Public Sector practice, and the private sector. He also engages with BCG's Grow Africa team, tapping the vast experience he gained in that region during his time away from BCG and his exposure to Africa since 1976.

After 17 years with BCG, Dave left in 2006 to join World Vision International, a global relief, development, advocacy, and microfinance organization dedicated to working with children, families, and communities to overcome extreme poverty and injustice. At World Vision, Dave served as chief operating officer, leading a comprehensive transformation effort and overseeing the organization's global field operations, emergency response, technical support teams, microfinance, and strategic support functions.



Kareem Elbayar

Programme Coordinator, OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBI)

Kareem Elbayar leads the Private Sector Unit at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and also serves as Programme Coordinator of the Connecting Business initiative, a partnership between OCHA and the United Nations Development Programme.

Previously, Kareem held positions as the Partnerships Manager for OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data (2018-2021) and Technology Partnerships Advisor for the Director of OCHA's Corporate Programmes Division (2016-2018). He also served as a Programme Manager for the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Iraq (2013-2016), overseeing a portfolio of law reform and emergency humanitarian relief projects in Baghdad and Erbil. 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 Masters in International Affairs from the George Washington University in Washington, DC.



Sahba Sobhani

Director, UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development

Sahba Sobhani has more than 20 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, a track record of operational leadership, innovation, and management of six global UNDP-led strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives in business and development, including the Business Call to Action Initiative, the Connecting Business initiative, and the G20 Global Platform on Inclusive Business.

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 working with local businesses to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. CBI Member Networks are independent chambers of commerce, trade federations, business associations and private foundations that 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 or email connectingbusiness@un.org.

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