



CASE STUDY

Just-In-Time: Pioneering Private Sector
Collective Impact in Humanitarian Action

The **Connecting Business Initiative (CBI)** is a partnership between the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and is dedicated to supporting the private sector in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Contact: connectingbusiness@un.org

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This and other materials are available online on the [CBI website](#).

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Cover Photo: A cohort of 30 participants from five different countries completed the 2024 Joint Indo-Pacific Region Swift Water and Rope Rescue Training Program in Taiwan. Here, they practice on the Xiugulan River. Photo: Asia-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management Sri Lanka (a CBI Member Network).

Historically, the global humanitarian sector has disproportionately relied on a small group of high-income donor governments and multilateral institutions to fund large scale humanitarian responses. However, multiple conflicts, forced migration, and more frequent and larger-scale climate disasters continue to increase humanitarian needs. At the same time, geopolitical tensions, rising inflation, and shifting national priorities are constraining donor countries' budgets, the United States' dismantling of its historic USAID being a recent example. These trends undermine the capacity and effectiveness of the traditional humanitarian system and make it urgent to pioneer new ways to meet humanitarian needs.

Fortunately, some new models are gaining traction, most notably the Connecting Business Initiative (CBI) – a joint effort by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – that celebrated its ten-year anniversary in May 2026. CBI partners with the private sector in disaster management while ensuring the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Given its successes with private sector collective action on the ground in a wide range of humanitarian responses to date, OCHA recently prioritized the private sector as a critical partner in humanitarian action, as have multiple bilateral agencies and humanitarian organizations. A decade-old vision is now a reality, and just in time. The origins and growth of CBI offer important lessons in creating large-scale collective action with amazing impact.

A VISION FOR CHANGE – ONE HUMANITY, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The story begins in January 2012 when then United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, announced plans to convene a World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. He realized that the world would need to radically scale its capacity to meet the compounding human needs driven by more disasters, displacement, armed conflict, climate shocks, and plateauing resources. In February 2016, following four years of consultations and preparations, Ban Ki Moon issued *One Humanity, Shared Responsibility*, a landmark report asserting five core responsibilities to improve the world's capacity to take humanitarian action:

1. Prevent and end conflict
2. Uphold the norms that safeguard humanity
3. Leave no one behind
4. Working differently to end need
5. Invest in humanity

The report's annex presented a vision for the future of humanitarian action and an "agenda for humanity" outlined the changes necessary to uphold these five responsibilities.

In May 2016, more than 9,000 participants from 173 countries, including 55 heads of state, convened in Istanbul at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). There were seven high-level roundtables, 14 special sessions, and 132 side events at which governments, humanitarian organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders announced more than 1,500 commitments to improve the humanitarian system.

CALLING FOR PRIVATE SECTOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Among the many important outcomes of WHS was the repeated recognition that the private sector could become an ever more essential and integrated partner in the humanitarian system. With that intention, several visionary leaders at OCHA, UNDP, and in the private sector jointly launched an ambitious collective action vehicle – the Connecting Business Initiative (CBI). Among those engaged early on were the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), USAID, Hilton Foundation, UPS Foundation, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). CBI's purpose would be to identify national networks of businesses in disaster-prone countries prepared to collaborate with UN agencies and governments to bring their unique resources and expertise into disaster risk management and response to improve the lives and economic outcomes of communities facing a

crisis. After all, disasters impact a business's employees, customers, suppliers, operations, and the broader economy.

For business the argument was simple. Better prepared employees and their families help create a better prepared and more resilient company, which, across many companies, helps create better prepared and more resilient communities, and as scaled across communities, a better prepared and more resilient economy and country.

To CBI's visionaries, the potential was clear. When disasters strike, networks of businesses could complement the humanitarian system by adding skills, technology, and resources to scale and speed response and recovery, mitigating the loss of lives and livelihoods. CBI therefore would jump forward to catalyze, educate, and mature these business networks and their leaders and help businesses, the UN, and the country's disaster agency work together effectively. Additionally, CBI would connect these business networks across countries to share learning, good practices, and support each other in achieving more impact. The

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation offered boat-building workshops as part of a livelihoods recovery project in the aftermath of Typhoon Odette. Photo: PDRF



aspiration was that over time, the humanitarian system would regard business as an essential partner in saving lives, scaling impact, and building resilience.

But in 2016, CBI was an ambitious idea. There were no models for this constructed, scaled, on-the-ground collective action. There was no track record of impact. Humanitarian actors primarily regarded companies as donors of cash, matchers of employee contributions, and providers of sometimes helpful gifts-in-kind offered during well-publicized disasters. Few saw them as partners in action or appreciated the extent of what they could bring in capacity, resources, scale, and speed.

Now, 10 years on, CBI and its Member Networks are present in 71 states and territories and have assisted over 76 million people across more than 248 responses, proof that when thoughtfully engaged, the private sector can make a valuable contribution to risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery.



The private sector plays a dual role in disaster response. On the one hand, it's about saving lives and protecting critical assets. On the other, it's about restoring value chains and reactivating the economy as quickly as possible. The State depends on businesses and foundations to step in, and leaders like Butch and the PDRF team have shown that investing in emergency response centres, alliances and shared platforms is the way forward. Networking is the key to building stronger, more effective disaster responses."

*– Gustavo González,
former UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Philippines*

CBI MEMBER NETWORKS AND GLOBAL PARTNERS

CBI has active Member Networks in Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Guatemala (x2), Fiji, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, the Pacific, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, West Africa, and emerging Member Networks in Honduras, Mozambique, and Papua New Guinea, among others. CBI intends to add new country and regional networks, support scaling and capacity building in established networks, drive innovations in support, and accelerate learning about the humanitarian contributions possible through the private sector.



23
NETWORKS



Responded to

248
CRISES



Reached

76
MILLION PEOPLE



Mobilized

\$149
MILLION



Source: CBI Secretariat

AN ANOMALY OR BRAVE NEW MODEL?

In many ways, CBI is an anomaly in the world of collective action. Many more modest endeavours launch with great intentions only to languish or disappear entirely. In fact, of 24 collective-action initiatives launched at the WHS, just five of 19 remain active¹. It raises the following questions:

- Why is collective action so tricky to sustain?
- Why is CBI successful and many others are not?
- How did CBI establish and sustain leadership within a well-established and broad humanitarian ecosystem?

To answer these questions, we chose to systematically dissect all aspects of CBI using two proven frameworks for understanding collective action. The first framing is offered by The BCG Institute in its 2020 article [Collective Action in a Connected World](#) which notes five fundamental causes of the failure of collective action efforts and eight principles for success. For instance, collective action often fails because of weak underlying foundations that do not sufficiently build out the initiative's worthiness, unity, scope, commitment, and diversity. Let's look at how CBI avoided each dimension of failure and capitalized on each principle of success.

1. Based on the mapping of multi-stakeholder initiatives in the [Commitment to Action summary document](#) by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, last accessed 6 August 2026.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION

FIVE causes of collective action effort failure

- 1** **Failures of Worthiness**
Cause seen as worthwhile by those who would join it
- 2** **Failures of Number**
Need to reach sufficient scale, or foster belief it can
- 3** **Failures of Diversity**
Demonstrate eventual appeal to a broad audience
- 4** **Failures of Unity**
Proponents speak and act in unity
- 5** **Failures of Commitment**
Sustained commitment to overcome inevitable challenges

EIGHT principles for success of collective action efforts

- 1** **Make it easy for someone to act**
- 2** **Convey worth via purpose under plans / goals**
- 3** **To create unity, tell stories (don't just transmit information)**
- 4** **Broaden support by building on pre-existing initiatives**
- 5** **Communicate commitment: highlight and celebrate costly signals and pivotal action**
- 6** **Realize diversity in your support base early on**
- 7** **Leverage technology to sustain new forms of collective action (force multiplier)**
- 8** **Lead for collective action**

The starting point for good collective action is “**worthiness**”, the significance and authenticity of its purpose, which is continuously reinforced and clarified. CBI’s origins anchor in clearly understood humanitarian needs that put communities and businesses at risk. Grounded through an extensive consultation process leading to the WHS, with input from over 900 businesses and humanitarian actors, CBI created a shared understanding of urgency and potential of engaging the private sector in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. And today, that shared sense of worthiness is continually reinforced as Member Networks and their partners experience disasters and recovery in their own countries and see the importance of the private sector for local, collective, and anticipatory action. By sharing the stories of impact across Member Networks and regions, CBI constantly reinforces its mission and adds evidence of its ongoing worthiness.

Shared stories build “**unity**,” meaning all parties similarly align in professing and experiencing a common mission. Preserving that sense of unity is challenging as Member Networks staff change, so the CBI Secretariat acts as the steward of alignment and institutional memory and creates programming to effectively onboard new staff, Member Networks, and their partners in a country. CBI’s goal is to grow the number of countries and regions with CBI Member Networks. By operating at the nexus of the development and humanitarian sectors with support from UNDP and OCHA, respectively, and given its collaborative mindset, CBI’s focus is on the work and mission and making sure its position is complementary to other existing initiatives, UN capabilities, and those of national and donor governments. That focus, constantly nurtured by the Secretariat, avoids companies feeling sidelined, instead empowering them to make an impact as essential partners, reinforcing the value of companies’ experience and encouraging other companies to join. The engine of participation, impact, and narrative

enhances the scale of collective action. And that avoids another common weakness in collective action – flagging “**commitment**”.

In CBI’s case, the stories of Member Network broadcast across countries help sustain the sense of what is possible through committed and collective action. The CBI Secretariat enables Member Network leaders to share their impact and best practices, build a community of action and impact, and deepen commitment by convening virtual and in-person events and hosting platforms for posting stories and tools. Ongoing climate related and human generated disasters constantly remind members of the need and work remaining to be done. As CBI celebrated its 10th anniversary in May 2026, it has proven that the initiative and its partners are committed to its long-term mission. Because of the diversity of countries and companies engaged in CBI and the wide range of disaster events its members experience, CBI, by its structure and momentum, prevents another source of failure – **diversity of perspective, participation, and experiences**. CBI’s approach integrates a natural diversity of challenges and conditions, keeping its activities fresh and ever adapting. By working “as local as possible, as international as necessary,” the CBI Secretariat seeks the best complement of both top-down from the global institutional level (UNDP/OCHA/government/international partners) and bottom-up from local private sector networks. Diversity is the engine of learning and reinforces commitment by seeing that CBI’s joint mission extends across contexts and industries.

As such, CBI holds up well against that quick diagnostic of the five most common foundational failures of collective action.

How well does CBI embody the eight principles for effective collective action? The table below makes that comparison.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD

CBI EXAMPLE

1. Make it easy for someone to act

- a. Motivate voluntary action
- b. How can people believe, be inspired / influenced to change behaviour
- c. Use support tools to make it easy (educational platform, role models, applications)

The CBI Member Network in Peru, Hombro a Hombro, shares daily risk information—ranging from heat indexes to flooding—with regional media outlets at national level, reaching over 2 million people each day through its [Central Informativa](#) that was launched in May 2024. This initiative fosters a culture of preparedness and is replicable in any context.

After the August 2021 earthquake in Haiti, Member Networks in Mexico and the Philippines connected with their counterpart in Haiti to offer support and share practical experience in earthquake response, recovery, and preparedness.

CBI demonstrates proof of concept in disaster management through case studies, feature stories, in-person workshops, and webinars. These sessions—both public and member-exclusive—facilitate thematic and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, showcasing concrete actions and impact.

Additionally, CBI ensures that Member Networks remain informed about humanitarian principles and the importance of adhering to “do no harm” guidelines.

2. Convey worth via purpose under plans/goals

- a. Intrinsic motivator > extrinsic motivator

CBI Member Networks are established in countries where OCHA or UNDP operate and where there is a clear need due to natural hazards and crises. These networks serve a vital role in enhancing preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience. To accelerate network building, CBI does not create new networks, but rather onboards existing business associations or chambers of commerce already engaging in or interested in disaster management.

Through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, Member Networks introduce adaptable models that work across geographies, cultures, and crises. For example, Peru’s Hombro a Hombro developed the [Central Informativa](#), an AI-driven tool that analyses official sources daily to create easy-to-understand information packages, disseminated to a growing number of media outlets and reaching over 2 million people daily, and counting.

3. To create unity, tell stories (don’t just transmit information)

- a. Holistic meaning, assimilability, familiarity, vividness, emotional appeal
- b. Characters, memorable images, lessons, calls to action

Existing Member Networks serve as examples of successful collaboration with CBI, with beneficiaries featured whenever possible.

CBI aims to highlight more human-centered stories, using storytelling to illustrate its impact effectively. This includes leveraging written narratives, visuals, video materials, and interviews to share firsthand experiences from the ground.

Challenges:

(1) After-Action Reports (AARs): Member Networks need to improve consistency in collecting AARs to better capture lessons learned.

(2) Crisis Documentation: Obtaining timely and impactful photos of crises, their effects, and disaster management efforts remains a challenge.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD	CBI EXAMPLE
4. Broaden support by building on preexisting initiatives a. Leverage existing processes / communities / resources to accelerate impact	CBI establishes Member Networks only in countries where • a local private sector network already exists, • there is a UNDP or OCHA presence, and • the Government is open to collaboration. Strong local private sector networks are essential, and each should have at least one dedicated champion to lead CBI-related efforts. Collaboration is central to CBI's approach, integrating with existing initiatives whenever possible to maximize impact—for example, through partnerships with the UNDRR Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) or United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) networks.
5. Communicate commitment: highlight and celebrate costly signals and pivotal action a. Public commitments b. Take on tough challenges	CBI Member Networks showcase their impact by sharing results that demonstrate how they tackle difficult challenges. For example, PDRF raised US\$32 million in grocery vouchers to support families during the first COVID-19 lockdown. CBI continuously highlights Member Network achievements through social media and reports, including UNDP and OCHA Annual Reports and the OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview, reinforcing their commitment to addressing critical challenges.
6. Realize diversity in support base early on a. Enlist dissimilar people b. Create space in agenda for adaptations consistent with mission	CBI is a joint initiative supported by OCHA (humanitarian-focused) and UNDP (development-focused), providing it with a broad foundation of support. CBI encourages Member Networks to engage with a wide range of humanitarian actors, including UN agencies (UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, UN Women, etc.), governments, foundations, and NGOs. The diverse contexts of Member Networks—shaped by geography, politics, culture, and risk factors such as natural hazards and conflict—result in a broad and adaptable base of engagement and support. CBI promotes knowledge-sharing while encouraging Member Networks to tailor tools and activities to their unique contexts. This approach enriches the diversity of models, feature stories, and case studies available. Additionally, CBI emphasizes the importance of community engagement and gender considerations in all initiatives.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD	CBI EXAMPLE
7. Leverage technology to sustain new forms of collective action (force multiplier)	Virtual meetings enhance knowledge sharing across geographies, complementing CBI's in-person efforts to connect Member Networks through Regional and Global Meetings or targeted knowledge-sharing opportunities. CBI's "Innovation in Disaster Management" report, published in 2024, explores the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies in disaster response and resilience. CBI actively participates in global events—such as the UNGC Leaders' Summit, UNGA side events, and the Global Humanitarian Policy Forum—balancing virtual and in-person engagement. This approach expands reach while ensuring Member Networks are featured whenever possible.
8. Lead for collective action / need right leadership, that will a. Understand/articulate common purpose b. Understand mechanism of power and bottlenecks in system c. Communicate in persuasive way to diverse audience d. Persist in face of obstacles e. Evolve approaches as circumstances change	CBI collaborates closely with UNDP and OCHA leadership to communicate its mission and achievements. While leadership within Member Networks is diverse, CBI seeks to identify and highlight champions who exemplify effective leadership. These individuals and their initiatives serve as role models for successful engagement. CBI also facilitates thematic webinars and sessions for Member Networks, providing opportunities to inform, educate, and exchange insights across the community. Topics have included earthquake preparedness and response, building trust between sectors, and storytelling for impact, among others.

Reviewing the above table, CBI operationalizes all eight principles for effective collective action. So, CBI **avoids foundational failures and applies best practices.**



As part of the PAPYRUS MAIS project, the Alliance pour la Gestion des Risques et la Continuité des Activités (AGERCA), a CBI Member Network, conducted a capacity-building workshop for farmers on community emergency planning in Sud Cayes, Haiti. Photo: CBI/AGERCA/Riguerre Noel

LEADING IN AN ECOSYSTEM OF ACTION

There is a further test of leading effective, reinforcing collective action. CBI exists within a broad, dynamic ecosystem of humanitarian actors, mechanisms, and resources. The humanitarian system has ingrained operating structures, deep experience, thoughtful ethical and operating standards, and high expectations of its partners. Every disaster is different, the stakes are high, and events unfold quickly. CBI's mission is to complement that humanitarian ecosystem with collective actions by the private sector. The question then is how well CBI's Secretariat builds its role, positioning, and capabilities to exercise effective leadership in the wider ecosystem?

To answer that question, the authors applied the BCG Institute's "Ten Cs" framework (see visual below) of effective ecosystem leadership to enable collective action.

While partly by initial design and partly through the past decade of learning and adapting, CBI displays strong elements of all 10 capabilities:

- It continually "**conceptualizes**" and frames the role of the private sector in humanitarian action and within the humanitarian ecosystem, and is recognized in the UN system for doing so.
- CBI "**catalyzes**" and incubates new initiatives, like the role of the private sector in conflict contexts, based on the input of Member Networks, its humanitarian partners, CBI's Executive Board, and CBI's strategy.

TEN CAPABILITIES DEFINE SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP IN THE ECOSYSTEM



- It regularly “**convenes**” Member Networks in virtual and live forums to advance capacity building, reinforce commitment, and accelerate growth.
- CBI “**connects**” Member Networks across geographies when they can help each other grow skills, jointly respond to an emergency, or share resources for mutual benefit, for instance, to set up and manage a business-led emergency operations center at national level.
- CBI constantly “**communicates**” to partners and members about its role in the ecosystem, the role of Member Networks in the countries, better practices, and resources.
- The CBI Secretariat “**curates**” the CBI website with its resource libraries and toolkits for the benefit of the Member Networks but also others in the humanitarian ecosystem. It identifies where its resources can aid other agencies to avoid duplicative efforts, for example, by providing resources to guide companies who are part of the UNGC in terms of how to best respond to the Ukraine crisis. It also directs resources to help Member Networks fill a knowledge gap.
- As Member Networks form and grow, CBI “**certifies**” their readiness and maturity along the way, including the impact that they create.
- It also “**counsels**” the leaders of Member Networks on how to develop a disaster management strategy, seek support, engage with the national UN organizations, and work with their country’s emergency response structures.
- One area of ongoing development is “**capitalized**”. CBI works to raise donor and humanitarian system awareness, build the business case for investment, and stimulate bilateral and corporate contributions to fund the global Secretariat, its initiatives, and Member Network infrastructure and activities.
- And finally, CBI “celebrates” the achievements, capabilities, and impact of its Member Networks, not just within CBI, but also across the humanitarian ecosystem. CBI has established itself as a private-sector humanitarian collective action leader within the broader humanitarian ecosystem.

Not surprisingly, CBI’s strategy going forward is to build on its successes and grow its scale, impact, and capacity on these dimensions to enhance its leadership in the ecosystem further.

While CBI meets all the analytical tests for an effective collective action initiative and ecosystem leader, the best evidence comes from the stories and statistics of impact across its Member Network countries, regions, and every stage of the disaster management cycle.

HURRICANE OTIS CASE STUDY

Mobilizing business and civil society for a more effective response to Hurricane Otis: The power of partnerships

On 25 October 2023, Hurricane Otis made landfall in the city of Acapulco and across the State of Guerrero in Mexico. This was not only the first Category 5 Tropical Cyclone to ever strike Mexico's Pacific Coast, but it took the world – and weather forecasters and storm chasers – off guard, as most expected the storm to remain below hurricane strength instead of more than doubling in power in just 12 hours. Exceptionally warm ocean conditions, consistent with broader climate-change trends, contributed to the storm's rapid intensification.

The impact was predominantly in Acapulco City, and the state of Guerrero. Significant damage occurred in 29 municipalities. More than 80% of resort hotels were damaged in Acapulco, over 500,000 homes and businesses lost power, and water and sanitation systems suffered.

The Connecting Business initiative (CBI) partner on the ground, the Centro Nacional de Apoyo para Contingencias Epidemiológicas y Desastres (CENACED), through the platform Unidos por Ellos (UxE), coordinated the mobilization of the private sector and other allies on the ground to support the response and pave the way for recovery. Their strategic approach included three phases:

- immediate assistance (first days after the event),
- humanitarian assistance (2-3 weeks post-event), and
- early recovery and reconstruction (as of the 3rd week post-event).

Arriving on site the day after Hurricane Otis made landfall, the CENACED allies – more than 180 organizations – worked together over the first few weeks to support the Government in implementing a more effective response, leading to:

- More than **9,200 tons of humanitarian aid** (food and non-food items) collected and distributed
- **5.3 million hot meals** cooked in 12 community kitchens and delivered through 100 local restaurants
- **Over 183,500 liters of bottled water** distributed in addition to 280 tons of lime to sanitize public spaces, 37 tons of hygiene and cleaning products, 40 water cisterns of 5,000-10,000L capacity each, and 5 water treatment plants enabled to produce over 150,000 litres of water daily

- **More than 80 collection centers established** and 77 shipments of humanitarian aid mobilized
- **Four brigades deployed with over 60 brigadiers**, including psychological, medical, paramedical, and cleaning assistance

"We knew that the time to establish partnerships was before a disaster hit, which is why we launched our platform Unidos Por Ellxs in April 2022," says Elisa Trujillo, former Director General of CENACED, the CBI Member Network in Mexico. "Investing in all those relationships is what made it possible for us to be prepared and able to hit the ground running as soon as we heard the news about Hurricane Otis making landfall in Acapulco. Even so, I am amazed at the level of collaboration and hope that a silver lining of this crisis is that others can learn from our experience."

One area of collective action worth showcasing was communications. From providing routers in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Otis to restore connectivity to the affected areas to partnering with influencers and a movie theatre brand to screen a short call to action video before movie screenings, CENACED and their allies made it clear that business skills can make a world of difference when it comes to disaster management. From mobilizing resources to awareness raising campaigns and fighting misinformation, the work carried out demonstrated the power of collaboration and solidarity.

You can read more about the response to Hurricane Otis [here](#).



A volunteer organizes food items in the aftermath of Hurricane Otis in Guerrero, Mexico. Photo: CENACED

WHAT IS NEXT

Since its launch at the **World Humanitarian Summit in 2016**, CBI has grown from **10 Member Networks** to over **twice that number** by the end of 2025. While there has been notable progress in activating businesses in humanitarian action, more work remains to further scale and systematically integrate the private sector in the humanitarian sector. The key question moving forward is **how to institutionalize private sector engagement in disaster management** and enable humanitarian and development agencies and national governments to collaborate more easily with businesses during humanitarian action.

Toward those ends, CBI is undertaking three bold steps: scale in new models; anchor CBI in the humanitarian system; and accredit network capabilities.

First, build scale in regions to expand reach. Initially, all Member Networks were national, but in 2023, CBI expanded to include **regional platforms**, such as the **Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS)** and the **Caribbean Chambers of Commerce (CARICHAM)**, as part of a strategy to strengthen regional engagement. Thanks to regional platforms, which now also include **the Federation of West African Cham-**

bers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI), 71 states or territories are covered by CBI Member Networks and there is potential for more.

Second, anchor CBI's Secretariat firmly in the global humanitarian structure of the UN. Recently **OCHA elevated and expanded its Private Sector Unit** to include CBI and engaged it formally in the interagency structure which helps govern the global humanitarian system. The goal is to assure the private sector perspective and its capacities are always fully engaged in thinking through how the world can best respond to increasing humanitarian needs. To that end, CBI has deployed private sector focal points in emergency settings in Türkiye (2023), Jamaica (2025), and Mozambique (2026).

Third, enhance confidence across the humanitarian system in the capabilities and readiness of CBI Member Networks to engage in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery through formal accrediting. Similar accreditation already exists within **OCHA**, such as the **United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system (UNDAC)** and the **International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)**. CBI's new **Member Network Assessment**, conducted within **90 days** of joining, will establish a **tiering system** to standardize participation and engagement in response and recovery and give confidence to their government and partners.

Hombro a Hombro, the CBI Member Network in Peru, coordinates closely with the national disaster management organization, INDECI, so its emergency response activities and distribution of aid to hard-to-reach communities are complementary to Government efforts. Photo: Hombro a Hombro





The scale of today's crises means that your [private sector] supply chains, distribution networks, storage facilities and employees are all at risk of massive disruption, no matter where they are located. [...] For you to operate effectively, you need stability. Crisis disrupts markets, shrinks consumer bases and creates operational chaos. And in a deeply interconnected world, a disaster in one country can send shockwaves through many others. [...] So, in the existential urgency we both face today, we have a mutual self-interest in finding new, more impactful ways of working together"

– Joyce Msuya,

United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator,

Keynote to the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation

"Building Resilience" Conference, 6 May 2025



The bridge the Private Sector Humanitarian Platform Madagascar (PSHP Madagascar), a CBI Member Network, built in 2022 benefits four communities by improving access to education, to markets, to healthcare, and more. Photo: PSHP Madagascar

TÜRKİYE CASE STUDY

Lessons Learned from the Türkiye Earthquakes: Advocating for Private Sector Engagement in Humanitarian Response

In February 2023, Türkiye and Syria were hit by a series of high-magnitude earthquakes. The CBI Network Coordination Specialist, Florian Rhiza Nery, was deployed as the Private Sector Engagement focal point for United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In that capacity and in her ongoing role with CBI, she worked hand-in-hand with the CBI in-country partners, Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TÜRKONFED) and Business 4 Goals (B4G) as well as other associations of businesses to facilitate requests and offers of support during the response.

Her focus was on coordination and facilitating engagement between the private sector and the UN to leverage each other's resources and expertise to ensure the most effective and efficient response possible.

"As the private sector focal point, I act as a translator between the private sector and humanitarian partners," says Nery. "The private sector wants to help and in a high middle economy such as Türkiye, we have to recognize the critical role that the private sector, most especially the Turkish business community, brings to the coordination table."

Some of the challenges that she experienced were:

- A gap in awareness in terms of what the private sector can do beyond financial support, even within the humanitarian ecosystem.
- Hesitation to engage with the private sector which stems from not having the opportunity to understand the difference when it comes to the approach, language, and pace of the private sector compared with the UN and humanitarian agencies.
- The need to include the private sector in coordination discussions from the very beginning, but doing so in a manner that makes sense to the private sector, too.

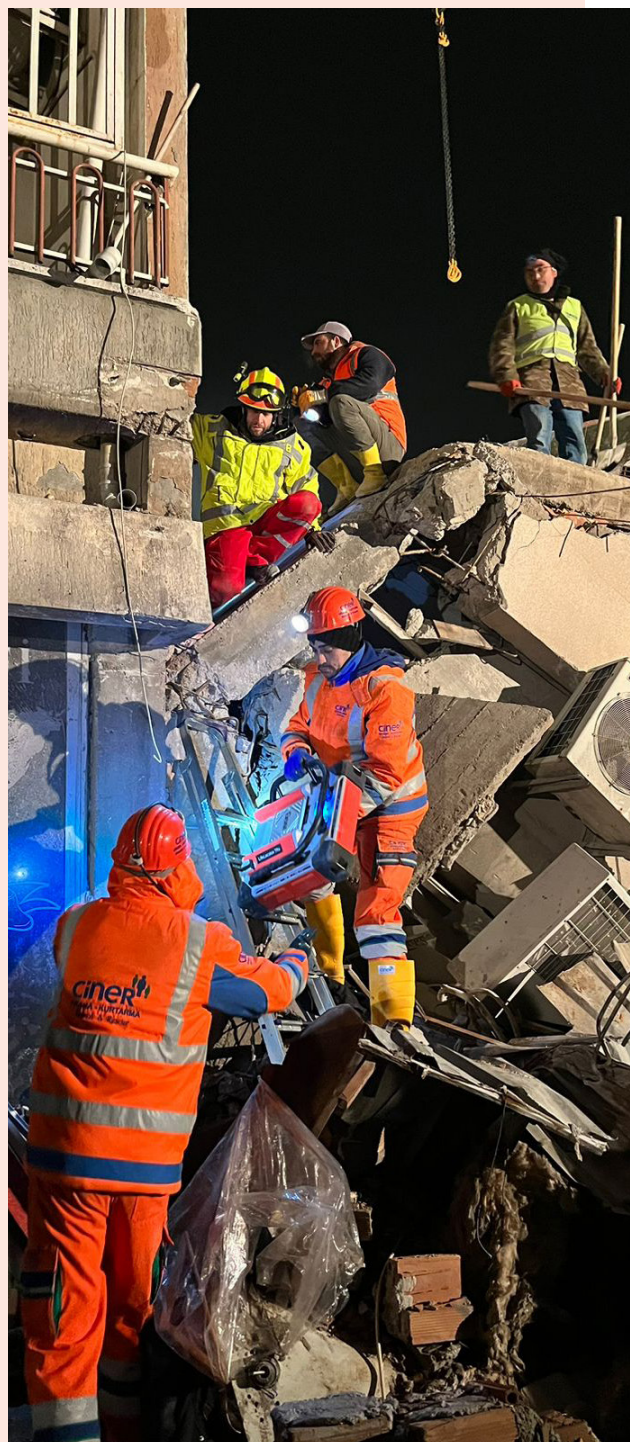
While the work around private sector engagement in humanitarian response continues, a selection of successful efforts in the context of the Türkiye earthquakes include:

- USD 11 million of donations, in the form of 243 trucks with food and non-food item donations, over 21,000 blankets, 395 shelter containers, more than 1,000 tents and 15,000 beds, four soup kitchens and three mobile kitchens, 100 portable toilets and bathrooms, 53 generators, 1,000 heaters.

- Support provided to humanitarian partners in terms of provision of transportation and accommodation during the first week of the response.
- Search and rescue support provided by CBI Member Networks in Indonesia, Mexico, and the Philippines as well as medical teams and technicians sent through official Government missions and alongside donations and medical supplies.
- The recognition of the private sector's contribution in situational reports, [Humanitarian Needs and Response Overview](#) and even in OCHA's financial tracking system.
- Tracking of private sector contribution via the [Türkiye Private Sector Contribution Dashboard](#) set up by CBI.

Arda Batu, Secretary General of the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TÜRKONFED), a CBI Member Network, described the role the network played: *"Türkiye is a disaster-prone country. Earthquakes are frequent, this is the reality. The question isn't IF we will have to face a deadly crisis, but WHEN, and HOW WELL we will be prepared for it. So, our approach at TÜRKONFED is to make sure our members, from the big company to the small shop owner, know what to do in the event of an emergency. We were prepared and knew what to do when the earthquake happened in part thanks to the work we've been doing with CBI."*

You can read more about the response to the earthquakes [here](#), and about the lessons learned event co-hosted by CBI, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and UNICEF at the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks [here](#).



CENACED, the CBI Member Network in Mexico, deployed a search and rescue team in the aftermath of the 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye, in partnership with the CADENA Foundation. Photo: CENACED

JUST IN TIME

What started as a vision by the Secretary General in 2012 and the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 is now global proof that well-designed and well-led collective action that ensures the humanitarian principles can accomplish remarkable things even in the most difficult of contexts. Today, humanitarian actors from OCHA to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) see the private sector as important partners, providing in-kind and financial resources to save more lives and livelihoods. Furthermore, other visionaries are pioneering new multi-stakeholder humanitarian collective action efforts like the World Economic Forum's Humanitarian and Resilience Investment Initiative (HRI) to bring institutional and private capital into the space, and the Private Sector Humanitarian Alliance (PSHA) endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in 2023 is building an onramp for global corporations to add capability to humanitarian response.

The combination of CBI, HRI, and the PSHA usher in a new era of private sector collective action partnering with humanitarian organizations for impact – from local companies to global companies to institutional capital – and just in time.



The private sector is one of our biggest donors... it's about reframing the argument. It's not about saying we have a plan, give us the money, it's saying how do we fix these problems together - how do we marshal the creativity and ingenuity and the problem-solving superpower that the private sector has? More widely, how do we build a movement? It cannot be just about the UN or humanitarian sector."

– Tom Fletcher,
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian
Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator



The National Center for Epidemiological Emergencies and Disasters (CENACED), a CBI Member Network, worked with partners to distribute thousands of kilos of maize and beans to hard-to-reach communities in the mountains of Guerrero, Mexico, as part of response and recovery efforts following Hurricane John. Photo: Colectivo Gusanos de la Memoria

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES

- BCG Institute, [Collective Action in a Connected World](#), 2020
- Kareem Elbayer and Elise Stynen, [How Businesses Save Lives in Emergencies: The power of logistics and in-kind support for a better humanitarian response](#), Impakter, 2022
- Kareem Elbayer, [When sectors work together, crisis resilience becomes greater than the sum of its parts](#), World Economic Forum, 2022
- Connecting Business Initiative, [Innovation in Disaster Management Report](#), 2024
- Kareem Elbayer and Arezo Kohistany, [How business can unlock innovative technology for greater disaster resilience](#), World Economic Forum, 2025
- Connecting Business Initiative, Case study [The Power of Logistics: How Businesses Save Lives and Livelihoods in Disasters](#), 2025
- Connecting Business Initiative, [Latest Annual Report](#), 2025
- Connecting Business Initiative, Case study [Private Sector Partnerships in Disaster Management in the Philippines - A Story of Resilience Through Relationships](#), 2025
- Joyce Msuya, [Video Transcript](#) speech to U.S. Chambers of Commerce Foundation event, on role of the private sector in humanitarian action, 2025
- Tom Fletcher, [interview with Al Jazeera](#), 2025
- [News section of the CBI website](#)

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