

To: Shadi Ghrawi, Private Sector Partnership Office, UNHCR
CC: Ayat El Dewary, Partnership Specialist, UNHCR
CC:
From: Hissa Al Thani, Arab League Secretary General's Envoy for Humanitarian Relief

Dear Shadi Ghrawi,

Thank you for the detailed agenda and the accompanying information you sent regarding the UNHCR meeting in Amman on November 8th; and for the efforts that you have been making on behalf of UNHCR's Private Sector Partnership Office.

Although I am not going to be able to attend the meeting, I remain concerned with the issues and would like to contribute some thoughts and suggestions to the discussion.

I would be grateful if you would convey my apologies to all those present, and would be honoured if you would read this brief statement at the meeting on my behalf.

Thanking you in advance for your understanding,

Hissa

**Message to Participants at UNHCR Advisory Council Meeting II Amman, Jordan,
November 8, 2016**

I would like to apologize to all of you present at the meeting for not being able to join you. Sometimes the amount of meetings we plan to attend outnumbers the hours of the day or the days of the month. However, I would still like the opportunity to share with you some of my concerns and comments. In return, I hope to hear your feedback and your opinions in due course.

As you are all aware, the magnitude of the current humanitarian crisis has overwhelmed the international community at all levels. From the UN General Assembly, to the Human Rights Council to the Refugee Council, to governments, relief agencies and non-governmental organizations from Europe to the Middle East to Africa and the Americas.

Everyone is looking for the best, most pragmatic solutions to protect and provide for the millions of refugees while at the same time safeguarding their integrity and respecting their humanity. And nowhere is more pressing or urgent than in our fragile region.

I think this where the initiative for establishing Councils, Committees, Working groups and other similar structures comes from. These are our way to enable us to cope with the volume of work in response to this tragedy.

A partnership with the private sector in our region is essential.

Not only do we need their financial and in-kind contributions. We need their expertise, their ability to organize, to keep an eye on the bottom line, to ensure minimum waste of money and effort in return for maximum benefit, their talent for keeping costs down while ensuring profitability—after all this is how businesses grow and prosper. And perhaps humanitarian and relief organizations need to learn how to operate on the same principle while ensuring their mission remains human centered. When businesses become more socially responsible, non-profit organizations become more fiscally responsible.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly welcome the participation and contributions of the private sector. I am familiar with the contributions the businesses and individuals present at the meeting have made to the humanitarian effort.

However, over the past few days, I have been thinking whether it is wise or expedient or even cost- and effort-efficient to create yet another council or committee or an additional layer to a structure burdened by bureaucratic procedures.

Those of you who were at the Doha and Bahrain meetings in the past few weeks may have heard me speak about the Arab Humanity Council that was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey in September.

The Arab Humanity Council is also a coalition of humanitarian and relief organizations as well as private sector members, research and strategic planning institutions. They objectives of the Arab Humanity Council are much the same as those proposed for this Advisory Council:

- To understand the needs
- To explore ways of meeting them

- To mobilize resources
- To advise on the complexities whether financial, logistical or operational
- To commit to specific actions with the greatest benefit and impact
- To strategize for changing and fluid conditions
- To ensure that all aid is centered on the rights and dignity of the refugees as well as their basic needs

As such, I would like to invite the UNHCR Advisory Council and its members to join forces, efforts and resources, and to combine expertise and experience with the Arab Humanity Council.

I propose that we combine our resources and focus our attention, time and effort on the crucial job we need to do.

I am prepared to act as an intermediary between members of UNHCR Advisory Council and those of the Arab Humanity Council to explore how best we can consolidate our efforts and combine our agendas to create the greatest benefit.

Thank you all for listening and thank you Shadi for kindly delivering my message.