

UN JOINS FORCES WITH NATIONAL ZAKAT FOUNDATION WORLDWIDE TO DEVELOP FRAMEWORK FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER AND POVERTY

Submitted by: Susie Asbury PR

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Why the UN are looking at Zakat to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has announced a joint project with the National Zakat Foundation Worldwide (NZF Worldwide) to develop a Zakat funds framework towards achieving a better and more sustainable future for all, in the fight against worldwide hunger and poverty.

As the Cost of Living Crisis escalates and people's suffering worsens, this landmark project will be led by NZF Worldwide to achieve some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in Somalia. These SDG's were created as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, including the goal of achieving no hunger and zero poverty.

Azim Kidwai, Director of NZF Worldwide says: "NZF Worldwide will work with local authorities, Islamic scholars and other stakeholders including the central bank of Somalia, on how to collect and deploy Zakat to the neediest."

Why is this necessary now and what does Zakat have to do with it?

Due to a combination of micro and macro factors globally, the World Bank has estimated that up to 95 million additional people could face the prospect of living in extreme poverty in 2022, breaking a trend that had been decreasing consistently for the last 25 years.

This is where the global Muslim community and specifically Zakat can play a vital role. As the third pillar of Islam, Zakat is a religious mandate binding all Muslims above a certain financial threshold, to annually donate a minimum of 2.5 per cent of their wealth to charitable causes to support disadvantaged communities. It can be used towards improving education, the environment, health, food security, and more. Considering the many millions of Muslims worldwide who are above this threshold, the money generated by a global Zakat fund could be a significant step in combating worldwide poverty.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) calculates that global Zakat could exceed 300 billion US dollars, while the Islamic Development Bank of Saudi Arabia calculates global Zakat to be closer to 1 trillion dollars per annum. The potential impact of this kind wealth when channelled correctly cannot be understated.

For the last 6 years, the National Zakat Foundation Worldwide (NZF) along with its sister organisation NZF UK have played a pivotal role in bringing this to the attention of the world. NZF Worldwide and its teams are currently operating in 5 countries, having distributed over (GBP) 30 million in Zakat and assisted over 100,000 people in need.

Along with the project in Somalia, NZF Worldwide will be playing another important role in the quest to create global awareness of the impact of Zakat. This year, NZF Worldwide will be hosting the 11th annual

World Zakat & Waqf Forum (WZWF), which will be held in Leeds between the 28th and 30th September.

They will be working with the UN once again as this year's WZWF will feature UNHCR as a Strategic Partner. In 2019, UNHCR launched its Refugee Zakat Fund as a trusted, compliant, and effective mechanism harnessing the power of Zakat and Sadaqah to assist the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) globally. To date, UNHCR was able to touch the lives of more than 4.3 million people across 14 countries through Zakat and Sadaqah funds received from its generous partners.

Khaled Khalifa, UNHCR's Senior Advisor for Islamic Philanthropy says: "We are extremely humbled by the trust that partners have put in our ability to effectively distribute Zakat funds to eligible displaced persons including in hard-to-reach areas. We look forward to participating in this renowned global platform which represents a great opportunity to share experiences, learn and build partnerships with Zakat entities for greater impact."

The 11th WZWF is shaping up to be their largest event to date with dignitaries from a variety of Muslim countries scheduled to attend. The key topics of discussion will range from how to use Islamic social finance tools, integrate technology, develop partnerships, coordinate zakat funds and finally logistics surrounding the setting up of various Waqf projects throughout the globe.

The WZWF was established in 2010 with the aim to synergize global stakeholders to maximise the potential of Zakat ensuring that this fundamental pillar of Islam benefits the global community. This unique forum for thought leaders will be attended by ministers, fund managers, academics and scholars who are collectively responsible for over a billion dollars' worth of philanthropic activity. This year's theme is "Islamic Philanthropy Leadership in a Global Cost of Living Crisis".

- Ends -

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Spokesperson Azim Kidwai, Director of NZF Worldwide, is available for interview. Please contact Susie or Shakera at Arc Management Consulting for more information or to arrange an interview.

CONTACTS

All Media Enquiries - arc Management Consulting

Susie Asbury – M: 07970 402931 or email office@arc-mc.com

Shakera Mohammed – M: 07974 661123 or email shakera@arc-mc.com

Arc Management Consulting is an organisation specialising in the services that help companies achieve growth to which they aspire. They develop business strategies, help develop brand awareness and provide marketing, advertising, PR, events, consulting and digital channel plans. Arc also provides tailored training to help businesses with their workforce needs.

FOOTNOTES

1 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

2 World Bank website April 2022 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

3 UNHCR Zakat Program 2019 Launch Report

<https://zakat.unhcr.org/hk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/UNHCR-Annual-Zakat-Report-2019-En.pdf>

4 5UNDP Blog article Aamir A Rehman (2019), Islamic finance for social good

<https://www.undp.org/blog/islamic-finance-social-good>

5 <https://nzfworldwide.com/>

NATIONAL ZAKAT FOUNDATION WORLDWIDE

• Following the success of National Zakat Foundation (NZF) UK, in 2016, NZF Worldwide was set up as a central body to connect the work and activities of the various local platforms. Today, NZF Worldwide is proud to serve NGOs, international foundations, like the UN, and philanthropists seeking to improve the social impact of their Zakat investments.

Website: <https://nzfworldwide.com/>

WORLD ZAKAT & WAQF FORUM

The World Zakat & Waqf Forum is the world's premier Zakat forum for sovereign and specialist Zakat institutions from across the world. Established in 2010, the forum has become the centre for thought leadership, innovation and public policy dialogue for legitimate Zakat specialists' organisations serving across the world.

Website: www.leeds2022.com

PRESS BRIEFING FOR WORLD ZAKAT & WAQF FORUM

The Press Briefing for the event will be held on 28th September 2022 in Leeds.

Please contact arc Management Consulting at rsvp@arc-mc.com if you wish to attend.

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