

**Introductory Remarks by the Assistant-Secretary-General (ASG)**  
**Ms. Kyung-Wha KANG**

**Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination**  
**New York, 26 June 2014**

Ambassdor Frisch, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues and Friends,

I am honoured and pleased to welcome you and to address this New York meeting of the Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord). It is the second time I have the opportunity to address this forum, having had the privilege to do so already at the Annual Meeting in Geneva in February.

In the meanwhile, I had the opportunity to speak about civ-mil coordination at a roundtable hosted by the US Defense Secretary and the USAID Administrator in Honolulu, Hawaii in April, where the defense Minister of ASEAN countries were discussing the challenges posed by large-scale disasters in the Asia-Pacific region. I've also visited many fields where OCHA colleagues are coordinating humanitarian responses, and learned a great deal about civ-mil coordination in action in differing contexts.

First, I would like to thank Ambassador Toni Frisch for his continued chairing of and dedicated engagement in this forum. My special thanks also to our Swiss colleagues from Berne and New York for their support and to the Government of Switzerland for providing us with this wonderful venue and hosting the lunch reception following the meeting.

At the February meeting in Geneva, participants worked in parallel sessions and in plenary on an array of issues, including the finalisation of the Terms of Reference to formalise the Consultative Group as the inter-governmental and inter-organisational platform for discussion, information sharing and related actions. It was agreed that the Consultative Group needed to widen its profile to the broader theme of Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) and relations, to include the appropriate use of military and civil defence assets (MCDA) - hence the revised title of the Consultative Group (previously Consultative Group on the Use of MCDA). And today, here in New York, the focus is on humanitarian civil-military coordination in very challenging complex emergency settings.

The Geneva meeting was held as part of a whole “network week”. Similarly, today’s meeting takes part during the “ECOSOC HAS week”, with an array of issues up for debate and exchange, all in some way interlinked to form the bigger picture. A Side Event on humanitarian civil-military coordination has become a “given” part of this week - it took place last Tuesday, with much success and interest. Having all these events and actors together in one place engenders the inter-activeness that is necessary for complementarity and synergy in humanitarian emergency operation.

Humanitarian civil-military coordination has indeed been at the forefront in places such as Mali, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Our staff who deployed as UN-CMCoord Officers to these locations are with us on-line and will reflect on the challenges they encountered during their deployments, to open up the main discussion of today.

But before we go to them, let me just say that humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination directly contributes towards the core component of OCHA’s mandate, and we at OCHA attach vital

importance to this function. UN-CMCoord experts establish crucial dialogue, liaison and coordination with international and national military, and with civilian humanitarian actors engaged with military forces; establish information exchange forums; assist the Humanitarian Country Team with the development of country specific humanitarian civil-military coordination guidelines and policies; ensure the establishment of “de-conflicting” mechanisms to avoid unintended consequences of combat operations; and provide training on effective and appropriate civil-military coordination to humanitarian and military actors.

Over a relatively short period of time, OCHA has deployed dedicated UN-CMCoord Officers to Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Afghanistan, Pakistan, oPt, and Jordan. In other complex emergencies, such as Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire and Haiti, humanitarian civil-military coordination is managed by OCHA UN-CMCoord focal points.

Humanitarian civil-military coordination has remained successful in Mali, largely because of the early engagement with military actors and the early deployment of dedicated civil-military coordination capacity on the ground. The establishment of dialogue and civil-military coordination platforms has been key to enhancing humanitarian access and resolving issues between the two communities. These factors have also been replicated in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. More on this from our colleagues in a moment.

Humanitarian concerns and challenges to respond to the needs of millions of affected people in humanitarian crises around the world are manifold. Humanitarian civil-military coordination is particularly important and challenging in complex emergencies. As we will hear from our UN-CMCoord colleagues, the role and dimension of this

function is evolving and expanding in many instances, relating to issues of security, humanitarian access and protection of civilians.

The role of and involvement by UN agencies, NGOs and indeed Member States is crucial in this process. There is no need for debate over “shared responsibility”, this is by now a given fact. By the end of the morning, we hope to have gathered new thoughts on whether, where and how the UN-CMCoord function should expand.

Thanks again for inviting me to make these few introductory remarks on behalf of OCHA. I wish you an inter-active and productive morning.

Thank you.