**Strengthening the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**

**ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment, 2014**

**16.30-17.45, 24 June 2014**

**Room C CB**

There has been growing recognition of the humanitarian problems caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Many types of explosive weapons exist, including aircraft bombs, artillery shells, missile and rocket warheads, mortars and IEDs. Such weapons generally create a zone of blast and fragmentation which makes their use problematic in populated areas. Civilians may be killed and injured and are displaced. Housing and essential infrastructure are damaged or destroyed. Those injured require emergency and specialist medical treatment, rehabilitation and psycho-social support services yet hospitals and clinics may have been damaged or destroyed. Education is interrupted by the damage to and destruction of schools. Livelihoods are devastated as means of production and commercial enterprises are damaged or destroyed. Explosive remnants of war pose a threat until their removal. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has a dramatic impact on post-conflict reconstruction requirements and costs.

Since 2009, the United Nations Secretary-General has consistently highlighted the use of explosive weapons in populated areas as a major challenge to the protection of civilians and is among the key issues addressed in this year’s report on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the context of “better serving the needs of people in conflict”. The issue has also been acknowledged by an increasing number of Member States, as well as the ICRC, as a serious humanitarian concern. The side event will provide Member States with a more in-depth briefing on the issue: to explain the nature of humanitarian impact and why this is an issue of concern; of the steps that can be taken by parties to conflict to mitigate impact and that stand as good practice; and of the future work planned by OCHA and others to curb the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas.

Mr. Thomas Nash (Article 36 and the International Network on Explosive Weapons) will provide an overview of the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Ms. Sahr Muhammedally (Centre for Civilians in Conflict) will provide an overview of the practical steps that have been taken by parties to conflict to curb the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Lastly, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang (ASG-OCHA) will discuss recent policy and related developments aimed at curbing the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects, including the outcome of a joint OCHA-Norway expert meeting to be held in Oslo on 17-18 June.

**Proposed agenda**

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| Opening remarks | Representatives of Norway and Argentina |
| Humanitarian Impact – Nature and Consequences | Mr. Thomas Nash, Article 36 |
| Mitigating Impact  | Ms. Sahr Muhammedally, Centre for Civilians in Conflict |
| Curbing the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effects | Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator |
| Q&A and discussion | All |
| Closing | Representatives of Norway and Argentina |

**Expectations**

* Raise awareness and enhance the dialogue around this issue between humanitarian actors, Member States and other relevant actors.
* Increase Member State support for ongoing efforts intended to curb the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide-area effects.