**General Assembly**
Seventy-fourth session

**Item 73 (a) of the preliminary list**¹

**Summary**

This report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 73/139 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2018/11 and covers the period January to December 2018.

The report outlines efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and response and reduce need, risk, and vulnerability. It describes humanitarian trends, challenges, and measures taken and makes recommendations, including on respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law, severe food insecurity and the threat of famine, forced displacement, disasters and climate-related impacts, and anticipatory financing in the age of the 2030 Agenda and the commitment to leave no one behind.

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¹ A/74/50
I. Introduction

A. Overview of Key Trends

1. Humanitarian crises are affecting more people than ever, with tens of millions forced to flee their homes; losing their livelihoods and facing hunger, disease and an uncertain future. Despite global economic and development gains, humanitarian crises are lasting longer than ever.

2. Global trends including poverty, inequality, population growth, conflict, climate change and pandemics, have eroded people’s resilience, making them susceptible to shocks. Crises also exacerbate situations of vulnerability of women, children, older persons, people with disabilities, the marginalized and the poor.

3. In 2018, Humanitarian Response Plans targeted a record 97.9 million people. Humanitarian funding requirements peaked at $25.1 billion. A record $15.2 billion was generously provided; however, the funding gap hovered at 40 per cent – as it has done for five years.

4. Conflict and violations of international humanitarian and human rights law have had devastating effects, including on children. In some conflicts, civilians were routinely killed or maimed and civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities and schools, were damaged or destroyed in targeted or indiscriminate attacks. People were cut off from food, water and life-saving assistance. Conflict-related sexual violence remained prevalent in many conflicts. The toll of conflict and protracted crises on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing is immense. 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which is a powerful opportunity to reinforce their continuing relevance and effective implementation.

5. By the end of 2017, war, violence and persecution had uprooted 68.5 million people, including over 40 million internally displaced persons. Internal displacement is an increasingly urban phenomenon, requiring new approaches for identifying, assessing and addressing needs.

6. Protracted crises are prevalent, with the average humanitarian crisis lasting over nine years. These situations cannot be solved through short-term approaches. Against the backdrop of the Sustainable Development Goals—with the promise of leaving no one behind—ending needs by reducing risks and vulnerabilities is critical.

7. Although the world is better at predicting, preparing for and responding to disasters, disaster risks continue increasing. Disasters drive humanitarian needs and reverse development gains. In 2018, 312 disasters affected some 65.6 million people. From 2008-2018, disasters displaced an average of 24 million people annually. Climate change is increasing the frequency, intensity and variability of extreme weather events, which threaten and destroy lives and livelihoods—including agricultural production—and weaken resilience. Climate change is a threat multiplier that can

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2 Humanitarian Insight–GHO review.
3 2018 UNHCR Global Trends Report; 2018 IDMC GRID.
4 CRED EM-DAT, excluding epidemics and insect infestations; accessed on 19 April 2019.
5 IDMC GRID 2019.
precipitate and exacerbate conflict, displacement and water and food insecurity. It poses an existential threat to some Small Island Developing nations.

8. Food insecurity is rising, driven by conflict, climate variability and economic downturn. In 2018, 113 million people were experiencing crisis-level food insecurity or worse. These numbers could increase in 2019 due to further shocks and stressors, with 143 million people on the verge of crises-level food insecurity. Accelerating initiatives to address food insecurity, such as the Global Network against Food Crises, remain important. In 2017, the combination of conflict, drought and acute food insecurity left over 20 million people facing or on the brink of famine in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. While the international community mobilized following the Secretary-General’s call to action, 2018 still saw staggering levels of hunger. In 2019, rising food insecurity is of particular concern in Yemen.

9. The breakdown of health systems in fragile settings increases risks of outbreaks and epidemics. Many recent outbreaks had animal sources, including Ebola and H5N1 highly-pathogenic avian influenza. Recent events have highlighted the challenges of controlling outbreaks and epidemics in complex humanitarian contexts and the importance of early mobilization of integrated responses.

10. Against these challenges, humanitarian organizations continue delivering, saving millions of lives and reducing suffering. In 2019, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations require $25.2 billion to assist 105.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

11. Addressing underlying causes of crises and making progress towards the 2030 Agenda requires a concerted effort to leave no one behind. Humanitarian actors and the repositioned United Nations development system must accelerate their collaboration to address needs, risk and vulnerability through joined-up, complementary responses. 2019 offers opportunities to reduce peoples’ vulnerability in the context of the Secretary-General’s prevention and management reform agenda, High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, United Nations Climate Action Summit, Small Island Developing States high-level conference on the Samoa Pathway, and the 6th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies in 2018

A. Complex emergencies

12. The United Nations and partners responded to several complex emergencies during 2018, including where violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law continued, humanitarian access was impeded, and protection of civilians and sexual and gender-based violence remained serious concerns.

13. In Yemen, over 22 million people—including 2.4 million displaced people—needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Nearly 18 million people—two-thirds of the population—were food insecure, including 8.4 million who were severely food

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7 Ibid.
insecure. Yemen continued experiencing the largest cholera outbreak in modern history and acute watery diarrhoea outbreaks, worsening rates of malnutrition and serious protection concerns.

14. In Democratic Republic of the Congo, over 13.1 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Although almost one million people returned home in 2018, 2.1 million people were newly displaced. 815,000 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers remained outside the country. Response activities to contain the Ebola virus disease outbreak declared in August 2018 were hindered by insecurity.

15. In the Syrian Arab Republic, some 13 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access remained a significant challenge. Protection of civilians remained a grave concern. Indiscriminate attacks on populated areas and civilian infrastructure, including medical and education facilities, water and electricity supplies, and medical and humanitarian personnel continued, although there was a relative reduction of violence in several areas over the second half of 2018.

16. In Afghanistan, some 6.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance by the end of 2018. Drought led to a steep increase in food insecurity in rural areas. Some 690,000 people were newly displaced (total of 1.2 million internally displaced persons).

17. In the Central African Republic, some 2.9 million people—63 per cent of the population—needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. A quarter of the population was displaced and 1.9 million people were food insecure.

18. In Chad, some 4.9 million people—almost one-third of the population—needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Over 620,000 people were displaced. Chad was host to 445,700 refugees and asylum seekers. Some 4.4 million people were food insecure.

19. In the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, some 10.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Humanitarian actors’ ability to deliver life-saving assistance was challenging due to the unintended effects of the sanctions regimes and low funding levels.

20. In 2018, some 2.8 million Haitians required humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian response focused on reducing food insecurity, ending cholera transmission and strengthening disaster preparedness and response.

21. In Iraq, some 6.65 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Despite the return to place of origin of nearly 4.2 million internally displaced people, some 1.8 million remained displaced. Protection needs remained central, alongside support to basic services and livelihoods.

22. In Libya, in 2018, some 823,000 people needed humanitarian assistance, including 241,000 children. Half of the people in need were Libyans, either internally displaced or host communities, while the other half were migrants, refugees or asylum seekers. Abuse, including sexual abuse, and exploitation, including in detention centres, remained a serious concern.

23. In Myanmar some 941,000 people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. By December 2018, over 909,000 refugees were in Bangladesh, the vast majority being stateless Rohingya. In Rakhine State, Myanmar, some 128,000 internally displaced
persons – almost all Rohingya – remained confined in camps. The Rohingya, including around 470,000 living outside the camps, continued to face discriminatory policies and practices and restrictions on basic human rights. In Kachin and Shan States, conflict escalated in 2018, temporarily displacing over 35,000 people. Humanitarian access remained challenging and declined in some areas, hampering the delivery of assistance and protection services.

24. Some 2.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance in the occupied Palestinian territory in 2018. The protracted protection crisis continued and humanitarian needs in Gaza grew. The upsurge of causalities, deep funding cuts, an electricity crisis and increased restrictions, resulted in the near collapse of the health system and undermined the provision of essential services.

25. In Pakistan some 2.9 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Humanitarian assistance delivery and access to services remained challenging in federally administered tribal areas with some 47 per cent of returnees relying on unsafe drinking water and 36 per cent having moderate to severe food insecurity.

26. In the Philippines, over a year after the conflict ended in Marawi City, over 73,000 residents remained displaced in Mindanao province and unable to return.

27. In the Sahel Region, 23 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Some 10 million people were food insecure and some 3 million people remained displaced in 2018. The crisis in Niger worsened, with 2.3 million people in need of assistance. Some 1.9 million people were internally displaced in north-east Nigeria in 2018. In Cameroon, 2.1 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2018. Cameroon continued hosting nearly 260,000 CAR refugees. In Mali, insecurity spread, particularly in the Northern and Central region, with 5.2 million people needing humanitarian assistance. In Burkina Faso, the number of internally displaced persons increased to 47,000.

28. In 2018 in Somalia, some 4.2 million people required humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian needs reduced by 32 per cent during 2018 due partially to improvements in food security; however, the humanitarian situation remained fragile, particularly among the 2.6 million internally displaced persons.

29. In South Sudan, years of conflict, violence and destroyed livelihoods left some 7 million people in need of assistance in 2018. Gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, increased. Some 7 million people were estimated to be severely food insecure at mid-year. By the end of 2018, about 4.2 million people were displaced, nearly 2 million internally.

30. In Sudan, some 5.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance. Improvements in security and access meant aid reached new areas. However, a challenging economic situation put pressure on food needs and sporadic fighting in Darfur caused new displacement. Sudan hosted over 768,000 refugees from South Sudan.

31. In Eastern Ukraine, some 3.4 million people needed assistance in 2018. Freezing winter temperatures exacerbated acute humanitarian and protection needs, including for women and children who were disproportionately affected, and the elderly who accounted for 30 per cent of those in need.

32. IOM and UNHCR appointed a Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region and established a Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform to respond to the needs of over 3 million refugees and migrants who had
left Venezuela by the end of 2018. A Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan launched in December 2018. UN agencies also expanded ongoing programming in Venezuela in 2018 to respond to increased humanitarian needs.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

33. In Asia and the Pacific, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake affected 544,000 people in Papua New Guinea. Tropical Cyclone Gita caused extensive flooding and damage in Samoa, Niue and Fiji, and affected 80 per cent of the population in Tonga. Tropical Cyclones Keni and Josie affected over 77,000 people in Fiji, causing significant flooding. Volcanic eruptions in Vanuatu led to repeated displacements. Two typhoons hit the Philippines, displacing some 2.13 million people. A 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit Indonesia’s Central Sulawesi province, triggering a tsunami, landslides and liquefaction affecting 1.5 million people. This followed a series of earthquakes, which displaced over 300,000 people. A tsunami hit Indonesia’s Sunda Strait region leaving over 400 dead.

34. Drought resulted in around 45-57 per cent reduction in annual wheat production in Afghanistan, affecting over four million people. In Pakistan, drought affected over 5 million people. Flooding in Kerala state, India, left 500 dead and displaced over 1 million people, causing damages and losses of $3.8 billion.

35. In Southern Africa, the 2018/2019 lean season started early in many areas due to erratic rainfall, which led to poor harvests, leaving an estimated 10.8 million people severely food insecure. The situation will likely be compounded by a late start to the 2019 rainy season and the probability of an El Niño event.

36. Despite generally favourable rains in Ethiopia in 2018, flooding affected some 419,000 people and some 190,000 people were forced to leave their homes in search of livelihoods, food, water and pasture. Ethiopia saw an increase in internal displacement in 2018, with nearly 2.6 million people displaced by inter-communal violence and over 500,000 people displaced by disasters at year end.

37. In Nigeria, around 2.3 million people were affected by severe flooding. In Mali over 70,000 people were affected by floods. In Niger, some 250,000 people were affected by flooding and 8,500 hectares of agricultural lands lost.

38. Further details and recommendations on disasters are addressed in the Secretary-General’s report to be submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/136.

III. Humanitarian Response in 2018 - Key Themes

A. Upholding norms

Strengthening respect for international humanitarian and human rights law

39. Armed conflicts remain the primary driver of humanitarian needs. Lack of respect for international humanitarian law, particularly the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precautions in and against the effects of attack, has become a pattern across many conflicts. Attacks directed against or indiscriminately harming civilians and civilian infrastructure lead to death, injury, illness, hunger and displacement, while thousands of people remain unaccounted for. The WHO Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care recorded 706 attacks in 2018, causing 151 deaths and 860 injuries. Countless schools, places of worship and civilian infrastructure and objects were targeted or recklessly damaged in 2018.
40. Of particular concern is the impact of armed conflict and violations of international humanitarian law on hunger. In 2018, civilians were deliberately or recklessly cut off from fields, livestock, food sources and livelihoods. Parties to conflict have damaged or destroyed factories, water and sanitation facilities, irrigation networks, fishing boats and fields. In the most extreme cases, although strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law, starvation of civilians has been used as a method of warfare. The Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 2417 is an important step as it recognizes the link between armed conflict, international humanitarian law violations and hunger; calls for monitoring and reporting and encourages those with influence to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. It is important that Member States and parties to conflict swiftly take action to implement this resolution.

41. With growing urbanisation, armed conflicts are moving to cities and densely populated areas, affecting millions of civilians. Fighting in urban environments considerably increases risks for civilians. Of particular concern is the pattern of unacceptable harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. When air and ground-launched explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 92% of those killed or injured were civilians. The destruction of housing, schools, hospitals, water and sanitation systems and other crucial infrastructure severely affects the civilian population over the long-term. The urbanization of warfare and the increased use of improvised explosive devices have also increased civilian casualties.

42. This underscores the urgency to act. On-going efforts to develop a political declaration establishing a commitment to avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas should be supported.

43. The protection of the wounded and sick and medical personnel and facilities meant to provide impartial medical care lies at the core of international humanitarian law. Yet, the destruction of hospitals in direct or indiscriminate attacks, threats against medical personnel and patients and the removal of medical items from aid convoys have become common features in many conflicts. Such acts must be condemned. Counter-terrorism measures are increasingly weakening the protection of the medical mission. It is equally important that Member States and parties to conflict take concrete action to prevent and respond to such acts, as requested under international humanitarian law and called for by the Security Council in Resolution 2286.

44. Positively, in 2018 some parties to conflict and Member States took practical steps to respect and ensure respect for the rules of war and enhance the protection of civilians. These include training of armed forces, adopting national frameworks on the protection of civilians, halting or conditioning arms exports or other forms of military support on the basis of compliance with the laws of war, and investigating and prosecuting war crimes. Some Member States started reviewing their national frameworks to bring them in line with Security Council Resolution 2286 and/or joined the political declaration on the protection of medical care in conflict. Building on these good practices to encourage others in taking practical steps to respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians is critical. Strengthening the protection of civilians in armed conflicts is of urgent concern and must be at centre of the global agenda.

Operationalizing humanitarian principles, negotiating humanitarian access and pursuing acceptance
45. Impediments to access by affected people to assistance and the delivery of humanitarian relief are leaving millions without aid. Insecurity, denial of humanitarian assistance, violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, interference, diversion and misappropriation of aid, restrictions of movements within and into countries and bureaucratic impediments continue hindering humanitarian access and principled humanitarian operations.

46. At the field level, acceptance of humanitarian workers is increasingly challenged. Looting, misappropriation and violence against and detention and abduction of humanitarian workers, mainly national staff, continue. In 2017, 158 major incidents of violence against humanitarian operations occurred in 22 countries, affecting 313 aid workers. Current armed conflicts, characterized by a multiplication and fragmentation of parties, present a major challenge for humanitarian organisations. The politicization of humanitarian access compounds these challenges. The arbitrary withholding of consent and impediments to relief operations cause increased suffering, death and impede operational effectiveness.

47. Simultaneously, attempts to conflate humanitarian and political, security or counter-terror objectives are multiplying, undermining the perception of humanitarian action as neutral. Donor conditionality continues, in some cases, to inhibit impartial humanitarian action and may create unmanageable requirements. Without express assurances from national law enforcement bodies to the financial sector, the practice of ‘de-risking’ restricts humanitarian organizations’ access to banking services and leads to fears of legal or reputational risks.

48. These dynamics impact humanitarian needs, increase delivery costs and affect programme quality. For instance, the need to resort to remote management programming in some contexts—because of the impossibility of maintaining sustained humanitarian presence—directly impacts affected populations.

49. Restoring an environment that preserves the impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian action, including space for engagement and negotiation with armed groups, and that is conducive to rapid, safe and sustained humanitarian access is imperative. Some Member States have shown willingness to work towards safeguarding impartial humanitarian action. The European Union took an important step with the inclusion of a general humanitarian exemption in its March 2017 Directive on counter-terrorism. The clarifications by the Security Council and General Assembly that counter-terrorism measures should comply with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law are important steps. Member States should take practical steps to implement these decisions, including in line with Security Council resolution 2286. Instances of impediments and arbitrary denial of access must be effectively addressed and the parties responsible must be held accountable. Developing clear, simple and swift procedures for the entry and deployment of humanitarian personnel, goods and services will improve access. Humanitarian organisations should continue strengthening their systems to prevent and respond to risks of aid diversion or misappropriation.

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9 https://aidworkersecurity.org/sites/default/files/AWSR%20Figures%202018.pdf
B. Reducing Displacement

Addressing and reducing forced displacement

Internally Displaced Persons

50. Over 41 million people remained internally displaced due to conflict and violence at the end of 2018\(^{10}\). Two trends are notable. First, most internally displaced persons live in situations of protracted displacement with no or limited access to durable solutions. Second, a growing number—if not the majority—of internally displaced persons are displaced in urban areas. The impact of internal displacement on host communities, including access to basic services and livelihoods is often significant, straining the achievement of the SDGs or threatening to reverse development gains. Better solutions are needed. While addressing short-term emergency needs, humanitarian organizations must adopt a longer-term perspective from the outset of the response to work with national and local authorities, host communities, internally displaced persons and development counterparts to reduce vulnerabilities, rebuild livelihoods, increase resilience and achieve durable solutions.

51. General Assembly Resolution 72/182 called on the Secretary-General to work with Member States and the United Nations System to explore ways to better address long-term needs of internally displaced persons and support host communities. In 2018, OCHA, UNHCR and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons spearheaded a multi-stakeholder three-year Plan of Action, focused on national-level collaboration. The plan, launched in April 2018 for the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, aims to foster exchanges of good practices among Member States and humanitarian and development organisations, including on disasters-induced displacement and durable solutions. It focuses on four key areas: law and policy; data; IDPs’ participation; and protracted displacement and durable solutions. In CAR and Ukraine, GP20 workshops used the “Breaking the Impasse” Study methodology to propose a multi-stakeholder approach to address the short- and long-term aspects of internal displacement. This is a positive first step, but more efforts are required.

52. 2019 marks the 10\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Kampala Convention, a legally-binding instrument for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa, providing an opportunity to promote further ratification and implementation and share initiatives and best practices.

Refugees

53. In 2018, the General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees which is grounded on the international refugee protection regime and seeks to ensure a more predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing among Member States. In 2019, UNHCR will host a Global Refugee Forum to garner pledges and contributions – including on financial assistance, resettlement allocations and the right to work.

54. By the end of 2018, 15 Latin American, African and Asian countries had rolled out the comprehensive refugee response framework, leading to improvements in

\(^{10}\) IDMC GRID 2019.
responses to refugees and host communities, including measures for self-reliance and social cohesion.

**Migrants in vulnerable situations**

55. At least 4,667 people died or went missing along migratory routes in 2018\(^\text{11}\). Migrants in vulnerable situations can face overwhelming risks, including loss of life, disappearance, violence, exploitation, trafficking, abduction, extortion, lack of access to services and arbitrary detention. Xenophobic political narratives about migration have become more prevalent. The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration reinforces needed action.

56. Humanitarian partners continued rolling-out the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative’s guidelines and developing Migration Response Plans, Regional Response Plans and Mixed Migration Working Groups to improve response for migrants in vulnerable situations. The new United Nations Migration Network will support the implementation of the Global Compact, in complementarity to existing coordination systems.

**Displacement in the context of disasters and climate impacts**

57. In 2018, 17.2 million new displacements associated with disasters were recorded in 142 countries and territories\(^\text{12}\). The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration recognizes displacement in the context of disasters and the need to reduce risks and increase preparedness. The Global Compact on Refugees recognizes that environmental degradation and disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movement. In September 2018, the Task Force on Displacement, established by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, provided recommendations on integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the impact of climate change. UN agencies and partners are supporting efforts to address impacts of climate change and strengthen climate resilience, including through the Secretary-General’s Climate Resilience Initiative and work to foster climate risk management in humanitarian hotspots. In line with the Sendai Framework, shifting to a risk management approach, improving disaggregated data collection and use and monitoring risks are critical.

**C. Advancing Humanitarian-Development Collaboration and linkages to peace**

58. Humanitarian crises are increasing in number and duration. Since 2015, appeals for crises lasting five years or longer have spiked and now command most funding received and requested (80 per cent).

59. The need for closer collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to achieve collective outcomes and decrease vulnerability is now widely recognized. Governments are increasingly linking efforts to reduce humanitarian needs with those to achieve the SDGs. Donors are adapting their systems to provide better aligned humanitarian and development aid, with the OECD DAC having issued a recommendation on the humanitarian-development nexus.

\(^{11}\) IOM Missing Migrant Project.

60. The Secretary-General is mobilizing UN Principals and UN country leadership as well as the World Bank towards shifting the response to crises to more joined-up approaches, fostering prevention and achieving progress on the SDGs. The Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC) works to ensure greater coherence of humanitarian and development action in crises and transitions to long-term sustainable development and in reducing vulnerabilities to build resilience.

61. The JSC focused on high-level support to the field in seven priority countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia, where progress was made working towards collective outcomes such as reducing food insecurity and malnutrition, enhancing basic service delivery, and finding durable solutions for internally displaced persons in line with the ambition of the SDGs.

62. The JSC also carried out a review in the above-mentioned countries to assess progress, good practices, remaining gaps and bottlenecks to achieving collective outcomes, and support to country leadership. Among the main challenges are the need for strengthened leadership; predictable and less fragmented funding; reinforced capacities, particularly in RC offices; strengthened multi-sector data analysis; and use of collective outcomes to inform planning frameworks and related financing. High-level advocacy to further strengthen partnerships with IFIs and the African Union and collaboration with Governments remains key. The review will result in recommendations targeting systemic and country-specific issues requiring further high-level attention and support of JSC members.

63. The JSC operates in support of ongoing reform processes and informs decisions aimed at strengthening RC/HC leadership and effective coordination between humanitarian and development activities, taking account of their linkages to peace; and fostering joined-up planning and programing. It also fosters robust engagement with the World Bank and other IFIs, for flexible and sustained funding, and financing for collective outcomes. The Committee ensures coherence with key coordination frameworks and mechanisms, and will work closely with the Executive Committee, Chief Executive Board, UN Sustainable Development Group, IASC and others.

64. The IASC, including through its Task Team, prioritized humanitarian-development collaboration and undertook activities, including peer-to-peer exchange, workshops and technical support, to this end.

65. The implementation of the United Nations Development System reform offers opportunities to further strengthen humanitarian and development collaboration. This reform is complementary to principled humanitarian action, undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182.

66. Independent and empowered Resident Coordinators will be better equipped to provide leadership in reducing need, risk and vulnerability. A new generation of UNCTs will more effectively identify and work towards development results that reach the most vulnerable. The revision of development planning (UNDAF) and analysis tools (Common Country Analysis) will allow development, humanitarian and peace-building actors to contribute to joint analysis and ensure better connectivity and complementarity with the work of HCTs, Humanitarian Needs
Overviews, Humanitarian Response Plans and other inter-agency plans and humanitarian appeals.

Localization

67. The Agenda for Humanity harnessed momentum for localization with the call to reinforce and not replace local and national systems. This entails acknowledging local and national actors’ capacities and comparative advantages, enhancing their technical capacity, removing funding barriers, increasing their decision-making role, promoting a contextualized response and working with local and national actors as equal partners.

68. There have been advances. IASC guidance has included localization principles for over a decade and humanitarian coordination structures continue including national and local NGOs. For example, twenty-two national/local NGOs and seven local authorities are in leadership functions of sub-national clusters in Somalia. International actors have invested in local capacities through training and technical assistance. Local and national actors can access more international funds, including country-based pooled funds and other pooled funds including the Start Fund.

69. Localization, however, still faces challenges. Local actors are often excluded from global decision-making processes. Structural barriers impede local actors from accessing international funding. There is a gap between global commitments on localization—such as those under the Charter for Change—and their application in the field. Progress will require leadership to address these barriers.

D. Humanitarian Financing

Shifting from reaction to anticipation

70. To keep up with growing needs, humanitarian organizations are moving away from waiting to respond until crises are causing immense suffering to managing risk and reducing vulnerability, thereby reducing the humanitarian toll. This shift will lead faster, more effective humanitarian relief. This anticipatory approach is gaining momentum and evolving in four areas.

71. First, the UN is leveraging funding for early action and preparedness. For example, in South Sudan, country-based pooled funds were allocated to support preparedness activities against an outbreak of Ebola in 2018. Complementing these efforts, the CERF released US$10 million for time-critical Ebola readiness activities in Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. These complementary allocations helped stem the spread of the deadly virus.

72. Second, humanitarianists are increasingly using contingency funding to accelerate early action for predictable emergencies. By tying funding to pre-agreed triggers, response times can be cut from months to days. Examples of trigger-based contingency funding for early action include the IFRC’s forecast-based fund, the START Fund’s anticipation window, and the World Bank-UN’s Famine Action Mechanism. FAO is also implementing its Early Warning Early Action approach in 18 countries. Ongoing testing, evidence-gathering and learning from the integration of stronger early warning data and predictive analytics into decision-making is critical to take predictive financing models and funding volumes for early action to scale.
73. Thirdly, humanitarians are exploring the use of insurance and structured risk financing to better protect against disasters. For example, the African Risk Capacity is protecting agricultural production through sovereign insurance in regions vulnerable to drought, erratic rainfall and climate impacts. In another case, some 30,000 farmers covered through micro-insurance under the World Food Programme’s R4 initiative have received $1.5 million in payments against drought. The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, which makes payouts when earthquakes, flooding or storms hit, paid-out over $55 million in four countries after Hurricane Irma. Further, humanitarian and private sector organizations are examining the potential of structured risk financing solutions for complex emergencies, including ways to improve the impact of money spent in volatile settings.

74. Fourth, the humanitarian community is improving the accuracy and rigor of needs assessments underpinning the forward-looking approaches outlined above. Risk-informed needs assessments are vital in maximizing the value of every dollar invested in relief. Developing a stronger focus on risk analysis and vulnerability is crucial to scaling-up anticipatory financing, escaping chronic underfunding, and reducing suffering. Moreover, it provides a sustainable and nimble financial model that is fit for purpose now and in the years to come.

IV. Humanitarian Response in 2018 - Developments in Operations and Coordination

A. Improving humanitarian coordination and response

Humanitarian Needs Analysis

75. In 2018, progress was made to improve joint and impartial needs analysis. A common methodology for humanitarian actors across sectors to jointly and holistically assess humanitarian needs and understand underlying causes was tested. The quality of humanitarian population in need estimates in humanitarian needs overviews and the analysis of the severity of people’s unmet needs continued to improve. Further key developments are planned for 2019.

76. The Centre for Humanitarian Data continued increasing the use and impact of data, overseeing a record growth in the Humanitarian Data Exchange platform, which hosts over 8,000 datasets from 200 organizations. The INFORM initiative continued supporting the development of shared open-source risk analysis. OCHA is coordinating an inter-agency effort to improve the quality and availability of baseline data underpinning preparedness and response. Work continued through several initiatives to improve data – including interoperable data on internal displacement. As data and technology expand, it is important for sensitive data to be protected.

Humanitarian Response Planning

77. Humanitarian response plans are increasingly based on strengthened planning processes, including a more systematic use of the analysis of needs, trends and risks, current response and constraints, and government and development actors’ response capacity. Multi-year planning is increasing with 11 countries using multi-year plans or strategies in 2019. Humanitarian response planning is increasingly connecting with other country planning frameworks, such as UNDAFs and integrated mission planning.
78. Launched in 2018, Humanitarian InSight\textsuperscript{13} is a web-based portal for humanitarian response planning and monitoring. It provides up-to-date, consolidated data on humanitarian needs, the number of people reached and funding to inform decision-making.

79. In November 2018, the IASC Principals endorsed the “Scale-Up” activation protocols, which replaces the L3 response mechanism. These protocols help ensure the humanitarian system responds quickly and in a coordinated manner in rapidly deteriorating and sudden-onset crises.

80. Inter-agency humanitarian evaluations continue enhancing accountability and transparency. In October 2018, an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation—focused on the collective humanitarian response to recurring droughts—launched in Ethiopia to support learning and accountability.

\textbf{Cash-Based Programming}

81. Scale-up of cash-transfer programmes to achieve humanitarian objectives continues, with over ten per cent of humanitarian assistance estimated to be delivered through cash. The use of multi-purpose or sector-specific cash as dignified, flexible, effective and cost-efficient modalities is increasing. Further efforts are needed to ensure joined-up approaches to cash programming and delivery, including, where possible, by using national social protection systems for delivery. In December 2018, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and OCHA committed to work toward a common cash system in crises globally.

\textbf{B. Disaster Preparedness and Response}

\textbf{UNDAC and INSARAG}

82. Since 1993, UNDAC has responded to over 285 emergencies in over 100 countries. In 2018, UNDAC teams provided tailored support to the government-led emergency response in Indonesia and to government emergency operations centres in Nigeria. In Papua New Guinea, UNDAC supported the government and Humanitarian Country Team with information management, situational analysis and coordination.

83. In 2018, INSARAG continued strengthening Member States’ urban search and rescue capacity, including through technical advice and region-wide simulation exercises. This support over time has contributed to some Member States developing their national capabilities to respond to earthquakes.

\textbf{El Niño/La Niña Episodes}

84. In March 2018, the IASC endorsed the Inter-Agency Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Early Action El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) episodes which provide a framework for early action to help mitigate and prevent impacts and catalyse early humanitarian and development action. They outline what actions to take, by whom and when, following warning signs of an ENSO event.

85. In September 2018, following a warning about a possible El Niño event, a Watch was triggered and an ENSO Analysis Cell stood-up, as per the SOPs. 25 high-risk counties were identified and regional and country teams initiated preparedness and

\textsuperscript{13} https://www.hpc.tools/
early action measures and examined early action initiatives using pre-committed funding.

**Partnerships with regional organizations and the private sector**

86. OCHA continued rolling-out the IASC emergency preparedness package across regions. OCHA's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean worked with partners to prepare for the 2018 hurricane season. OCHA's West Africa and Southern and Eastern Africa regional offices continued engaging regional organizations, national disaster management agencies and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to enhance preparedness and response. OCHA's Asia and Pacific regional office continued strengthening partnership with ASEAN, focused on enhancing preparedness and disaster risk reduction efforts.

87. In 2018, seven of the Connecting Business Initiative-supported private sector networks responded to disasters. Partnerships with the private sector are also leading to innovative new programming. For example, the WhatNow Service, developed by the Red Cross and Red Crescent and Google, is increasing the dissemination of disaster preparedness and risk reduction messages. UNDP and Deutsche Post-DHL are preparing airports around the world for disasters.

**C. Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action**

88. In 2018, IASC organisations reiterated their pledge to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action. With the support of the Global and Field Protection Clusters, protection principles and the IASC Gender-Based Violence Guidelines were increasingly integrated and applied in coordinated assessments and joint analysis and planning. Protection actors placed greater focus on multi-sectoral solutions to address linkages between protection and food insecurity, medical assistance and education. Humanitarian workers are increasingly developing and using gender-sensitive, age-appropriate community-based approaches to protection services to respond to the different needs of affected people. In November 2018, the IASC Global Protection Cluster led a stocktaking of the IASC Protection Policy implementation, which identified areas for improvement.

**Child Protection**

89. Crises in 2018 led to a deterioration of protection afforded to children. Global efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children and their recruitment into armed forces or armed groups were scaled-up, including by building on progress made by the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. Additional Member States endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration to reinforce the protection of education facilities from military use and safeguard students and education staff.

**Sexual and Gender-based Violence**

90. The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, a multi-stakeholder initiative, continued mobilizing action and has helped galvanise donors, United Nations agencies and NGOs to prioritise gender-based violence, develop stronger policies and accountability mechanisms and mobilize funding. Continuing to strengthen efforts on protection reporting, including on gender-based violence incidents, and analysis remains paramount.
D. Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse

91. The Secretary-General is committed to driving full implementation of the zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse by the UN and its partners; scaling-up country-level implementation; and ensuring that victims/survivors have adequate protection, appropriate assistance and reliable recourse to justice.

92. In 2018, the IASC Principals endorsed a comprehensive strategy to combat sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, with concrete actions to scale-up safe and accessible reporting mechanisms—including community-based feedback mechanisms, protection and assistance to survivors and strengthened accountability. The IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and PSEA is providing operational guidance and technical support to in-country PSEA networks and Humanitarian Country Teams. IASC partners have accelerated measures to respond to PSEA including through trainings, addressing gaps at the country level and strengthening vetting and reference checking to prevent transgressors from being re-employed.

E. Accountability and Inclusion

Accountability to Affected Persons

93. Collective accountability mechanisms continued to be established and strengthened. Guidance was produced for field teams on the inclusion of accountability to affected people in Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans. Questions around accountability to affected populations were included in multi-sector needs assessments. OCHA, UNICEF, IFRC and partners conducted inter-agency workshops to develop joint action plans for accountability.

Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

94. In April 2018, the Secretary-General initiated a process to develop a policy, action plan and accountability framework to strengthen system-wide accessibility and mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities in the United Nations System. Humanitarian action was a cross-cutting issue at the July 2018 Global Disability Summit, which generated significant commitments. The Security Council held its first-ever open discussion on persons with disabilities in armed conflict in 2018. Work continued to strengthen global and institutional capacity for disability inclusion, including on the collection and use of disability-disaggregated data.

95. Endorsed by 216 stakeholders, including 28 Member States, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action has increased political will for inclusive programming. The IASC Guidelines on the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities will be finalised in 2019. Their operationalization will be key to bring change.

Youth in humanitarian action

96. Over 40 stakeholders have signed the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and are committed to addressing the priorities, needs and rights of youth affected by crises and to meaningfully engaging them in all stages of humanitarian action. The Compact is developing Inter-Agency Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian Settings, which will launch in 2019.

F. Gender equality and empowering women and girls
Gender

97. Women are often first responders to crises and play a central role in the survival and resilience of families and communities. Investing in gender equality and the participation of women and girls helps humanitarian programmes serve the different needs of affected populations more effectively.

98. The updated IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action was issued in 2018. Over 7,000 copies were distributed in 43 countries. An Accountability Framework is being used to monitor the IASC’s collective performance.

99. The IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM) was launched in June 2018. The GAM is a planning and monitoring tool that helps programme staff and management determine how gender and age are considered in the various stages of the humanitarian programme cycle. The GAM strengthens the original Gender Marker by including age and adding a monitoring component. The GAM will replace the Gender Marker in the 2019 Humanitarian Programme Cycle and will be reflected in the Financial Tracking Service.

100. GenCap advisers provide advice and build capacity in gender mainstreaming and support the GAM’s implementation. In 2018, the Gender Capacity Standby Project completed 18 field deployments and 1 global deployment in sudden-onset emergencies and protracted crises.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

101. Sexual and reproductive health and rights can be overlooked during conflicts and disasters, with serious negative consequences. Pregnant women and girls risk life-threatening complications without effective access to reproductive health services, including skilled birth attendants. Limited or non-existent access to family planning in emergencies is a major challenge. Women and young people become more vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. An updated Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings, which is embedded in human rights principles, was issued in 2018 to support preparedness and response in conflict and disasters settings. The provision of sexual and reproductive health services in emergencies is life-saving and must be prioritized and adequately funded.

G. Humanitarian pooled-funds

102. The Central Emergency Response Fund is a critical enabler of immediate, effective and coordinated humanitarian action. In 2018, the Fund allocated over $500 million, supporting humanitarian response in 47 countries. Country-based pooled funds channelled $836 million in 2018 to 685 humanitarian organizations in 17 countries. National and local organizations were direct recipients of one quarter of those funds. Donors generously provided record-breaking contributions to country-based pooled funds in 2018, totalling over $950 million. The Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds continued strengthening their complementarity to leverage comparative advantages and maximize impact.

H. Strengthening human resource capacity

14 https://gms.unocha.org/content/cbpf-overview.
103. The Secretary-General’s Global Human Resources Strategy is aligned with the principles of equitable geographical representation and gender parity. OCHA is striving for a workforce that represents gender balance at all levels and geographic diversity reflecting the communities it serves and which reaps efficiency and productivity gains that come from a diverse workforce. OCHA’s People Strategy includes action plans with annual indicators. Goals are set to increase OCHA’s workforce diversity with representation of all regional groups. OCHA’s People Strategy pursues a work environment which promotes equality and inclusiveness and is free of bias.

104. United Nations agencies are implementing strategies to recruit a gender and geographically diverse pool of applicants. For example, WFP established a Workforce Analytics tool to allow real-time monitoring of the gender and geographic representation of its workforce. UNHCR introduced learning and development programmes to increase the readiness of women for leadership positions and focus management development on leading diverse, inclusive teams.

V. Recommendations

105. On the basis of the foregoing, I recommend:

(a) Member States, parties to conflict and humanitarian organizations should intensify their efforts to promote and ensure full respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

(b) Member States and parties to conflict should allow and facilitate the rapid, unimpeded and sustained access of impartial humanitarian relief, simplify and expedite procedures for the entry and deployment of humanitarian personnel, goods and services; and adopt facilitation measures in line with the Model Agreement between Member States and the United Nations concerning measures to expedite relief consignments and possessions in emergencies;

(c) Member States and parties to conflict should urgently take all measures necessary to promote, respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, ensure the protection of civilians and other protected persons and objects, develop national policy frameworks establishing clear institutional authorities and responsibilities for the protection of civilians, increase advocacy, and bring to justice perpetrators of serious violations, including for violations and abuses perpetrated against children;

(d) Member States and parties to conflict should respect and protect medical and humanitarian workers and assets, including by refraining from direct attacks against them and taking constant care to spare them in military operations. They should take all necessary practical measures to protect humanitarian and medical missions, such as those defined in the recommendations made pursuant to Security Council resolution 2286 (2016). Including the non-criminalization of medical care and humanitarian assistance, incorporating in domestic law required protections under international law and sharing best practices and lessons learned;

(e) Parties to conflict should avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas and develop operational policies to this end. Member States should engage in efforts to develop a political declaration to address the complex, cumulative and long-term pattern of harm resulting from use of explosive weapons in populated areas;
(f) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to collectively place protection at the centre of humanitarian action, maximize protection outcomes and promote safety and dignity in humanitarian response, including by increasing capacity to design and implement programmes to minimise safety risks for affected populations and improve the protective environment;

(g) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should ensure perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation are held accountable;

(h) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should increase their long-term investments and efforts to ensure that sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response services are in place from the onset of an emergency and that survivors have immediate access to critical services and tools to assist in their recovery, and should systematically integrate prevention, risk mitigation and response in humanitarian response plans and strengthen data collection and monitoring;

(i) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations should develop and implement effective strategies to prevent and measurably reduce internal displacement, and protect internally displaced persons, in line with international standards and in a way that ensures their participation in programmes and decisions that affect them, supports their resilience and self-sufficiency and achieves durable solutions;

(j) Member States should ensure that counter-terrorism measures comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, and do not impede principled humanitarian and medical activities;

(k) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should provide the human and financial resources necessary to deliver programmes responsive to the different, context-specific needs of affected people, including by ensuring the systematic collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability; according priority to funding for gender equality, women’s empowerment and self-reliance and the use of the IASC gender with age marker; and ensuring the meaningful inclusion of women and girls;

(l) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should strengthen their capacities, including human and financial resourcing and expertise, to mainstream inclusion of persons with disabilities in programmes, policies and strategic frameworks; and should improve the collection and use of disability-disaggregated data, and ensure participation of persons with disabilities at all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle;

(m) Member States, the United Nations, humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant actors should support humanitarian-development collaboration, including joint analysis and joined-up planning to reduce risks and vulnerabilities and increased multi-year financing geared towards achieving collective outcomes;

(n) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should remove barriers hindering collaboration and meaningful partnerships among international, regional, national and local actors to reinforce and not replace the
capacities of local actors and institutions, including by providing capacity-building and funding before, during and after emergencies. They should promote and fund community engagement approaches in the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance;

(o) Member States, parties to conflict, the United Nations, humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant actors should intensify efforts to prevent and respond to global food insecurity, especially for countries at risk of famine, including by enhancing humanitarian-development collaboration, investing in agriculture to protect livelihoods and food production, providing urgent and flexible funding, scaling-up shock-responsive social protection systems; and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law, including prohibiting the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and facilitate access to affected people;

(p) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should accelerate efforts to address humanitarian impacts of climate change, including by increasing the use of climate risk analysis in planning and programming and strengthening early warning systems, preparedness, resilience and the effectiveness and timeliness of response in at-risk locations;

(q) Member States and humanitarian organizations should continue taking forward commitments and initiatives launched at the World Humanitarian Summit and voluntarily report on progress and best practices through the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation.