Canada thanks Switzerland for convening this year’s Humanitarian Affairs Segment.

The exponential increase in humanitarian needs and costs to reduce human suffering is unabating in 2021, due to the compounding impact of conflict, large-scale forced displacement, climate-related disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some parties to armed conflict continue to perpetrate unlawful and targeted attacks against civilians and civilian objects including hospitals and schools, with devastating consequences for affected populations.

In Central African Republic, DRC, Ethiopia’s Tigray region, Nigeria, South Sudan and Syria, recent attacks and violence on hospitals, medical and humanitarian personnel, transport and equipment have destroyed critical infrastructure and services, depriving millions access to life-saving care.

Women and girls face conflict-related sexual violence while children suffer further grave violations, including recruitment and use as child soldiers.

Millions of refugees and internally displaced persons are without prospects of durable solutions.

In conflicts around the world, humanitarian assistance access is blocked, in direct violation of international law and contrary to humanitarian principles.

The effects of climate change including desertification, drought and flooding are intensifying humanitarian and protection needs and along with conflict, fueling food insecurity and famine.

Simultaneously, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to record levels of humanitarian need, reversing decades of development progress in crises-affected settings.

These trends highlight the urgency for more action by all of us – as humanitarian actors, as donors and as Member States.
Firstly, we must adapt our collective response. We must be more effective and more efficient, to allow us to reach an ever-growing number of people in need. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to innovate, let us build on the lessons we have learned.

We must redouble our efforts to support the meaningful participation of local and national actors in humanitarian response. This is not only key to ensuring our collective accountability to affected populations, but also to improving the effectiveness of our action.

Gender-responsive and inclusive humanitarian approaches must become the norm, and responses informed by the meaningful participation of women and girls, refugees and internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized persons.

We must prioritize the centrality of protection in humanitarian responses, including prevention, mitigation and responses to sexual and gender-based violence, with community-based and centered solutions developed in close collaboration with affected communities.

All actors in the humanitarian system – donors, UN agencies and NGOs, both local and international, have a collective and shared responsibility to ensure more effective and efficient humanitarian responses.

Canada is pleased to be working with a wide range of trusted humanitarian partners, and to provide predictable, flexible and timely funding that allows them to respond to the evolving needs of the most vulnerable. In 2020, Canada provided over 35% of its humanitarian allocations as unearmarked and softly-earmarked funding, surpassing the original Grand Bargain target of 30%. In addition, Canada now provides over half of its humanitarian assistance as multi-year funding to enhance predictability, enable our partners to have more constructive partnerships with local actors, and to ‘cascade’ funding to the local level.

In continuing to demonstrate our support for localization, Canada significantly increased its support to UN Country-Based Pooled Funds, contributing over $100 million to 17 UN Country-Based Pooled Funds in 2020 and 2021.

Through our gender-responsive humanitarian approach, we are working to meet the critical needs of the most vulnerable, especially women and girls. For example, Canada’s funding helped to reach 131,336 beneficiaries with sexual and reproductive health
services in Jordan provide a range of reproductive-health services to more than 330,000 Yemeni women and girls; and to provide emergency shelter protection, clean water and life-saving food assistance to an estimated 7.1 million crisis-affected people in South Sudan.

However, an effective humanitarian response is only part of the solution. Member States have a responsibility to address the root causes of conflict, and ensure the strictest adherence to International Humanitarian Law, and to promoting accountability for IHL and human rights violations.

To significantly minimize the humanitarian consequences arising from conflict, Member States have a responsibility to fully implement specific resolutions including on the protection of healthcare (UNSCR 2286), conflict and hunger (UNSCR 2417), protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict (UNSCR 2475), (UNSC 2474) missing persons and protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population (UNSCR 2573).

Canada continues to actively advocate for IHL implementation by parties to conflict, including rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need. We fully support accountability for violations including through swift and transparent investigations.

Our deepest appreciation to Indonesia and Switzerland for co-facilitating this year’s resolution negotiations. We urge delegations to support this resolution and adopt it by consensus.