



**“Strengthening humanitarian assistance to face the challenges of 2021 and beyond: mobilizing respect for international humanitarian law, inclusion, gender, innovation and partnerships”**

Statement by Ambassador Maritza Chan, Deputy Permanent Representative  
Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the ECOSOC, 23-25 June 2021

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*Cotejar con alocución – Check against delivery*

Madam Chair:

At the outset, Costa Rica would like to thank Her Excellency, Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations for her Chairpersonship. We also extend our thanks to the Swiss and the Indonesian delegations for their dexterous co-facilitation.

Costa Rica is ever-eager to investigate, update, and promulgate how Member States, the UN System and other stakeholders can improve our emergency humanitarian assistance. Such discussions are urgent as ever: The number of people who need humanitarian assistance worldwide has reached a record high of up by 40 percent compared to the same time last year. We appreciate that this year’s theme—“*Strengthening humanitarian assistance to face the challenges of 2021*”—incorporates gendered, intersectional lenses for new and innovative partnerships. Indeed, anything short of that would be insufficient for the challenges we face.

In this regard, Costa Rica would like to stress three aspects of importance:

First, Costa Rica proposes that we streamline both new and established mandates for a stronger, more collaborative, and more coherent humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Indeed, humanitarian, development and peace mandates are part-and-parcel for the widespread human security and robust peace prescribed by the 2030 Agenda. We think this will make our policy more innovative, our response more active, and our implementation more effective. Costa Rica reiterates that *maintaining* peace and *proactively* addressing the root causes of instability is always the preferred course of action.

Second, Costa Rica reiterates that the most vulnerable in our societies warrant special attention as we recuperate from the pandemic. In particular, women and girls have been among the hardest hit, as caregivers, frontline workers, and victims of intimate partner violence, as compounded with decreased access to healthcare. *All* children are deprived access to education when schools are closed, but girls in particular are pushed towards forced marriage, child labor, and other forms of exploitation. Realizing gender equality and empowerment requires thorough and equal access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services and mental-psychosocial support. We reiterate the need for gender expertise throughout humanitarian response, as well as frank discussions of how women are not just victims but also indispensable leaders, strategists, and practitioners.

Third, Costa Rica emphasizes the legal, ethical, and policy obligations of rapid, unimpeded and sustained access of impartial humanitarian assistance. We reiterate the urgent legal mandate to protect humanitarian facilities and assets, including by stopping attacks against essential infrastructure, mitigating damage, and placing civilian protection at the center of our humanitarian



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platform. Even when conflict is protracted; even when it seems no one is looking; even when it appears there is no common ground: Parties may not target civilians per international law, ethical imperative, or the spirit of the Charter.

Lastly, as the pandemic subsides in some places but intensifies in others, Costa Rica maintains that we must not return to old beginnings but *forge a new one*. We did not need a wakeup call that humanitarian assistance was urgent, unequally distributed, or under-funded. But we got one. Indeed, the pandemic reminded us that we cannot hide behind our national borders; our most looming threats require unified, concerted, and concretized responses. And no forum is better equipped than the United Nations to actualize this. Thus, Costa Rica embraces all our UN resolutions, programs, and discussions such as this one with a keen eye towards communication, preparation, and integration of the forth-coming transboundary challenges we face. We welcome fellow Member States to join us in this results-oriented, future-looking approach.

Madam Chair:

Together, we must mobilize resources and stand in solidarity to address the needs of the most vulnerable, through a stronger, reformed, coordinated and reinvigorated rules-based multilateralism.

I thank you