Title:
*Hunger and the Protection of Human Rights*

**Sponsors and Organizers:**
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office in Geneva (TBC) and UNCHR/Global Protection Cluster

**Time and Date:** Wednesday 21 June 2017, 08.30 - 09:45
Room XXII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: *Restoring Humanity and Leaving No One Behind: Working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.*

**Background and objectives**

**More than 20 million people** across four countries risk facing starvation and water shortages within six months. Wars in Yemen, north eastern Nigeria and South Sudan have devastated livelihoods and collapsed economies, with famine already declared a reality in parts of South Sudan due to continuing conflict since 2013. In Somalia, a drought and a long-standing conflict is devastating the agriculture sector, ruining the country’s rural and urban economy, and bringing the country to the brink of famine.

Conflict and violence in all four countries have impeded physical and economic access to food, particularly as a result of the disruption of livelihoods and markets, as well as distorted access to land and employment. These conditions have further fuelled internal displacement with a spill over effect to neighbouring countries. The number of South Sudanese seeking refuge in Ethiopia has risen significantly with a daily outflow of 660 people in March 2017, compared to 103 people in January 2017.

In 2017 demand for humanitarian aid has reached record high levels as several humanitarian crises continue to unfold. With the upsurge of crises in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan, and complex operations in Ukraine, Burundi, DRC, CAR, Niger, and Mali, the humanitarian system is struggling to meet rising humanitarian needs. UNOCHA estimates that more than $5.6 billion is needed this year by humanitarian operations in Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria and Yemen. As of March 22, the humanitarian response plans only received 13.9% of its required funding. While assistance and protection continue to be the key goals of humanitarian action, the current alarming funding gap in meeting the needs of people in Somalia, South Sudan, north-eastern Nigeria, and Yemen raises fear that the situation will deteriorate fast if the international community does not act quickly.

Protection Clusters and sectors across all four operations are facing access constraints and severe funding shortages and their capacity to respond to growing needs is overstretched. The gravity of the situation requires life saving interventions by all actors. Timely financial support to ensure essential relief efforts and ward-off looming famine; as well
as collective, concerted and coordinated global efforts to save the crisis-affected people from facing the risk of hunger and starvation, are needed.

**Discussion points**

Against this backdrop, the side-event will focus on the following suggested questions and discussion points:

- Addressing structural factors contributing to the famine
- Correlation between food scarcity and protection risks; and
- Facilitating access and scaling up humanitarian and protection assistance to people in the context of famine emergencies

**Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations**

Despite the repeated highlighting of protection concerns, funding for activities to address some of the priority problems has been difficult to come by. In Nigeria, for example, the protection sector received only 12% of its funding requirement in 2016 and South Sudan received 26%. In Yemen, the protection cluster received 15% of its funding requirement in 2017 and Somalia received 7.4%.

Funding gaps in meeting the needs of people in Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Yemen raises fears that the situation may deteriorate fast if the international community does not act quickly. In all four countries, protection risks and concerns experienced by the affected population evidence strong links with health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene problems prompting the necessity for a coordinated and collective effort that holistically addresses immediate needs of those at risk.

Humanitarian access, timely and predictable funding are essential to deliver life-saving protection interventions and programming. If action is taken now to address imminent and crucial humanitarian needs, looming famine can be prevented.

**Format**

*(Co-)Chair(s):*

- Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations at Geneva
- Ms Carol Batchelor, Director of the Division of International Protection, UNHCR

**Moderator:**

- **Mr Pierre Gentile, Head of Protection, International Committee of the Red Cross**

**Panel composition:**

- **Ms Jessica Gorham, Regional Advisor Horn of Africa, Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility/Global Protection Cluster**
- **Ms Caroline van Buren, UNHCR Representative, Mogadishu**
- **M, Deputy Executive Director, WFP Rome**
- **Mr Tony Ojukwu, Director, Nigerian Human Rights Commission**
Background Material


Contact

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