



MIKTA Statement 2021 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

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

We, the countries of MIKTA – Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia – have the honour of submitting this statement for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment held in Geneva, 23 – 25 June 2021.

At the outset, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Chair and the Secretariat for organizing the first hybrid (virtual / in-person) ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS). The hybrid nature of this year's HAS reflects the desire we all share to maintain the important role of the HAS and its informative, participative and inclusive nature, through innovation, partnership and genuine commitment. We would also like to thank all the distinguished panellists for their invaluable insights at this year's high-level events and side-events, as well as extending our deep appreciation to the Co-Facilitators of this year's ECOSOC humanitarian resolution – Indonesia and Switzerland – for their excellent facilitation work in supporting virtual negotiations and delivering a balanced and consensus-based text.

However beyond these achievements, we continue to face the greatest health crisis of our lifetimes. MIKTA countries recognise the strain the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the health of people and on economic and social structures globally. For people in humanitarian and crisis-affected contexts, the pandemic has further overburdened already weak healthcare systems, exacerbated existing humanitarian challenges, and increased the risks faced by those in vulnerable situations. In responding to the urgency and magnitude of these challenges, we also recognise that multilateral cooperation has proved more valuable and important than ever before.

Against this backdrop and the theme for this year's HAS, *Strengthening humanitarian assistance to face the challenges of 2021 and beyond: mobilizing respect for international humanitarian law, inclusion, gender, innovation and partnerships*, MIKTA wishes to highlight several points of particular importance to our group.

- First, we reaffirm our call for full respect for, and promotion of, human rights and the elimination of any form of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia in response to the pandemic, including the right of every human being without distinction of any kind, to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In this regard, we are pleased this year's ECOSOC humanitarian resolution acknowledges the need to scale-up mental health and psychological support to mitigate and respond to the additional psychological consequences of the pandemic and stresses the importance of incorporating these services into humanitarian programmes.

- Second, we wish to reiterate that humanitarian assistance and protection should be delivered in full respect of international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. This includes support and protection of front-line and local humanitarian and healthcare workers. Without them, we are not able to reach those most in need and furthest behind. They deserve our full protection to safely and efficiently perform their lifesaving work.
- Third, we stress our on-going priority is the protection of people in the most vulnerable situations, both from COVID-19 itself as well as high levels of food insecurity, malnutrition and the rising risk of famine, including all women and girls, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, migrants, IDPs, and older persons, who are at a significantly higher risk of mortality.
- Fourth, we acknowledge the sobering global evidence of the profound and disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls, but equally recognize their vital contribution to a stable, prosperous and resilient post-COVID society. We urge all humanitarian actors to invest in gender equality, women's empowerment, girls' education and training, and to take action to prevent and address gender-based violence, discrimination and biases. The implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda should remain a priority.
- Fifth, the international community should continue to coordinate their efforts to avoid unnecessary barriers to trade and disruption to global supply chains, as well as facilitating essential movement of healthcare and humanitarian personnel, without undermining efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Sixth, we firmly believe that we are not safe until everyone is safe. Equitable access and distribution of safe, affordable, and effective COVID-19 vaccines for all is vital to end the pandemic and ensure a speedy and inclusive recovery. In this regard, MIKTA countries support the G20's agreement to recognize the role of COVID-19 immunization as a global public good and the establishment of COVAX and its Humanitarian Buffer.
- Lastly, we support the efforts of the UN humanitarian system and encourage relevant international organizations to facilitate the effective delivery of assistance to all countries in need of help, where health and socio-economic systems may be less able to cope with the pandemic.

As a like-minded group of countries that share common values and interests which transcend our diversity, we are strongly committed to working together in the spirit of unity, solidarity, and international and multilateral cooperation to promote better preparedness for future health crises in humanitarian settings, while effectively responding to the current one. To this end, we will continue exploring opportunities to collaborate to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.