Opening Remarks (CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

H.E. Ambassador Miia Rainne, Chargée d’Affaires a.i. of Finland to the United Nations & Vice-President of ECOSOC responsible for the Operational Affairs for Development Segment

2022 United Nations Economic and Social Council Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development

Roundtable 1 - Recurrent crises and sustainable solutions: building resilience and addressing rising food insecurity

Monday 20 June 2022, 10:00-13:00 (New York time)

ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Thank you, Ambassador Diego Pary Rodríguez, for giving me the floor and for your remarks setting the scene.

Let me echo – in my role as the Vice-President of the Operational Segment – that the current hunger crisis is of major concern. We must do better to both address the immediate humanitarian suffering and avert the looming risk of famine in parts of the world, and to build long-term solutions which reinforce community resilience and lead to achieving sustainable development, ending conflict and combatting climate change.

Across humanitarian, development and peace efforts, we must ensure our long-term solutions put people and communities at the center. The solutions need to be inclusive; build resilience and empower those who face intersecting risks and who are too often forgotten. We need to pay attention to those who are marginalized and yet have enormous agency and capabilities to bring to the table – such as persons with disabilities and older persons. As we move forward and tackle the solutions, we must also ensure that women and women’s local organizations - who we all know are central to any short and long-term, sustainable solutions - are brought into planning and decision-making across humanitarian, development and peace efforts. This is especially true in fragile contexts and in peacebuilding. Nothing will be equitable nor sustainable nor effective without women at the table at all stages – design, programming and execution.

I look forward to hearing what actions are critical and most impactful across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts to prevent and respond to the further escalation of food insecurity and risk of famine. And the actions that must be taken now.

It will be especially interesting to draw lessons from building resilience, for example through strengthened social protection systems, anticipatory approaches, and investing in climate-sensitive agriculture and livelihoods.

And finally, I’m looking forward to proposals on how different financing streams can incentivize collaborative efforts across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding to prevent, mitigate, and reduce needs, risks and vulnerability and build resilience. The International Financial Institutions certainly have a role to play here.
Closing Remarks (CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

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Thank you moderator, Heli and to our exceptional panel.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

This was an excellent roundtable discussion under the new format. Many ideas and solutions have been raised and I would like to thank all our panelists for the rich interventions and recommendations for action.

We heard about the profound impacts of food insecurity, actions that are being undertaken, the even more dire projections if we do not act with more urgency and at a greater scale, and concrete recommendations.

It is clear that a cruel interplay of conflict, climate change, COVID-19, and severe global inequalities mean that people around the world now face a wave of hunger and destitution not seen in generations. Famine once again is at our doorstep.

With social and economic chaos in its wake, a problem has been created that will reverberate through the world for many years to come. Vulnerable people and vulnerable countries are being hit hard, but – as the Secretary-General said - no country or community will be left untouched by this cost-of-living crisis.

I would like to echo many of the participants that in order to address this challenge of our time, international humanitarian assistance, development assistance and peacebuilding must go hand in hand. This is an “all hands on deck” type of crisis. This also means we need to support states and local communities better.

As we address the current needs, we also need to build long term resilience of vulnerable population, addressing the structural causes of hunger and reduce needs over time. This requires investing in development, including with innovative financing.
It also requires a more anticipatory approach which means faster, cost-effective, and dignified responses to predictable food insecurity. It also means that we can act before a crisis spirals out of control to protect development gains.

We know that areas most at risk of famine today are areas where conflict has become protracted and particularly lawless. This driver cannot be ignored. We must particularly think about how development actors can better operate in conflict-stricken or fragile countries.

Thank you. Ambassador Rodríguez, over to you with the last word and to close this roundtable.