Opening Remarks by Ghada Eltahir Mudawi, Acting Director, Operations and Advocacy Division at the Round table on “Recurrent Crises And Sustainable Solutions: Building Resilience and Addressing Rising Displacement”

ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development.

20 June 2022
15:00-18:00

Thank you very much. This is a subject which is very close to my heart.

I started [working] 26 years ago in the humanitarian sector in an IDP camp. I was planning to be a Professor of Literature, and it was the stories of women in that IDP camp that changed my life. And here I am.

So, this is something very dear to my heart.

The other story that I want to share with you.

You heard the numbers: 60 million people. But those are 60 million stories. Sixty million faces and lives that have been shattered.

I have had this piece [a handmade necklace] with me over the past 13 years. It was given to me in Yemen by a little girl [Fatma]. She was 10 years old when I saw her in 2009, that
same year that I gave birth to my daughter Lara. Lara is now 13 years old.
I don’t have any reason to believe that Fatma managed to return back home to start a new life. And I don’t have reason to believe that she had a chance to get an education and to go to school like my daughter Lara is doing.

So, the numbers are stories, they are real lives and real people out there. And I think today we have an opportunity to do things differently and to rethink our work differently.

I am delighted by the discussions and by the recommendations and remarks. And I have nothing more but huge support to all that has been said by my colleagues.

Mr. Piper, OCHA is looking forward to continuing working with you in your new assignment.

My colleague Sarah and other [UN] Resident Coordinators, we also look forward to supporting you in your new approach and responsibilities.

If there’s one thing that I would like to single out it will be the call in the Action Agenda by the Secretary-General for $100 billion for climate change for developing countries affected by it. From a humanitarian perspective, this is critical. How we respond to this call will go a long way in determining whether we get a handle on the growing internal displacement challenge. Why? Because the climate crisis is a threat multiplier.
Last year, the World Bank warned that without stepped-up climate action, 216 million people may be displaced by climate-related disasters by 2050. This is almost four times the current global levels.

This is a warning that we need to do something, and we need to do it now.

Together, humanitarian, development and climate action and conflict resolution can ensure stronger protection and assistance for displaced people.

We can reduce setbacks in gender equality and women’s rights, and help displaced people find a safe and lasting end to their displacement. We can help millions of girls like Fatma find and return home and build a new life.

I thank you very much.

END