Opening remarks for 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

High-Level Panel 3 on “Humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis: escalating risks, challenges and actions”

ECOSOC Chamber

New York, 23 June 2022, 10:00-12:30

Excellencies, Distinguished participants,

I extend a warm welcome to you all to the third high-level panel discussion which will focus on the topic “Humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis: escalating risks, challenges and actions”.

The climate crisis is a humanitarian crisis. As we have heard throughout this week - the impacts of climate change are profound: more intense and frequent natural disasters which are leading to rising levels of hunger. We heard that climate change is causing disease and infectious diseases to spread in different patters and more easily. Heatwaves and the number of heat-related deaths have increased and will continue to do so, especially among older persons. Water disputes will become more frequent, as will displacement by the most vulnerable people seeking water, food, and livelihoods.

On the global level, we need to urgently raise our collective level of ambition and implement the Paris Agreement and find a definitive solution to the global climate crisis.

Today’s panel will discuss the humanitarian impacts of slow-onset and sudden-onset climate-related disasters and their consequences, including displacement, migration, rising food insecurity, and loss of livelihoods and land.

We will explore the humanitarian implications of gradual climate-induced impacts such sea-level rise and glacier melt and resulting across several regions of the world - and what actions are needed now.

The discussion will include consideration of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report and what it means for the humanitarian system - as it warns of the limits to adaptation and how the pace and scale of changes is outracing the capacity of those in vulnerable situations to reduce risk and adapt.

In this connection, the panel will also discuss humanitarian perspectives on loss and damage associated with present and future climate change impacts on the most vulnerable and increasing support to them.
Finally, we will hear how the humanitarian system can scale up risk analysis, preparedness, early warning, early action and response in the face of the climate crisis considering the lessons learned and good practices gathered so far, in countries that are already severely affected by the climate crisis. I am also eager to hear how anticipatory approaches can play a role in preventing suffering and mitigating economic loss.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our distinguished panelists:

His Excellency, Mr. Carlos Fuller, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations & Chair of the Caribbean Community

Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator

Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, United Nations Climate Change High-Level Champion of Egypt for COP27 and Executive Director, International Monetary Fund, joining via video link.

Dr. Pablo Virasoro, Vice President of the White Helmets Commission of Argentina, joining via video link. And Her Excellency Ms. Sabina Frédéric, President of the White Helmets Commission of Argentina, who has submitted a pre-recorded video message.

His Excellency, Ambassador Mr. Conrod Hunte, Deputy Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations and Deputy Chair and Lead Climate Negotiator of the Alliance of Small Island States

Ms. Ko Barrett, Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Senior Advisor for Climate at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Dr. Adam Abdelmoula, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, joining via video link.

Ms. Carina Bachofen, Associate Director of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre; and

Ms. Sumera Javeed, Executive Manager, Health and Nutrition Development Society, in Pakistan, also joining via video link.

I also welcome our moderator, Chief of the Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Branch of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Anja Nitzsche, who will conduct the discussion. I look forward to an open, constructive and productive exchange of views.