

**Statement by Dmitry Chumakov,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN,  
at the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC**

**9 June 2020 г.**

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Under-Secretary-General,  
Excellences,

In our statement we will briefly reflect our approaches on a number of topics to which this year ECOSOC High-level panels are dedicated to.

*«Addressing the increasing complexity of health challenges in humanitarian context»*

The year 2020 brought us an unprecedented surprise. The world is facing not only a large-scale epidemic but an “invisible enemy” which continues to maintain its strong position, demonstrating an unknown power. There are simply no completely safe places on the planet. Not a single State, either developing or developed one, can cope alone with the consequences of COVID-19. In the current epidemiological conditions those countries that were in humanitarian situation before COVID-19, are most at risk now. And they require the greatest attention of the world community.

The practice confirms that the absolute guarantee of the effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance to countries in need is the strict observance by all humanitarian actors of the fundamental Guiding principles contained in the GA resolution 46/182 and subsequent UN humanitarian resolutions. We proceed from the priority of maintaining the aforementioned resolution as a cornerstone of the UN system of humanitarian response which, despite the difficulties, continues successfully, efficiently and quickly to solve the problems of meeting the needs of the victims. Deviation from these humanitarian principles puts at risks independent nature of humanitarian assistance and subordinates it to military and political agendas. Accordingly, it may cause problems with perception of such aid on the ground and threats to safety of humanitarian personnel.

In this context we urge all those involved in humanitarian relief activities, to take due account of the justified measures undertaken by the affected countries to establish continuous mechanisms of delivery of humanitarian aid to those parts of

countries, where IDPs and refugees camps are located. It is reckless not to take into account the risk of infection transmission to these places and their catastrophic consequences for people living there.

***«Combatting and preventing sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises»***

The Russian Federation condemns all forms of violence. Unfortunately, the majority of victims of violence, including in humanitarian emergencies, are women and children, who are especially vulnerable. While noting that sexual violence is more common, there are other forms of violence that are widespread: physical violence and psychological violence among others. We believe that we need to pay equal attention to all forms of violence.

We are convinced that respecting the provisions of international humanitarian law is key to addressing the issues of violence, including sexual violence. Humanitarian organizations should support the efforts by Member States, upon their request, through providing humanitarian assistance, making their expertise available and sharing knowledge.

In humanitarian settings the furthest behind have to be reached first. Often those are women and children, whose special needs have to be taken into account during and after humanitarian emergencies. To achieve tangible results, it is important to ensure that women and men, and girls and boys have equal access to assistance and support, including social and economic support, without discrimination.

In order to make women's voices heard, Member States should promote women's engagement in decision making in humanitarian settings. At the same time, such engagement has to be meaningful because artificial efforts such as setting the number or percentage of women who have to be present at the table does not guarantee that they will contribute effectively.

As for prevention and protection from violence in humanitarian emergencies in the face of COVID-19 outbreak, it is important to avoid duplications in the efforts of UN and humanitarian organizations that have been adjusted to the current circumstances. The mandates have to be strictly followed and collaborations and joint

programmes should focus on delivering as one in a transparent, efficient and effective way.

***«Mobilizing action to improve humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons and achieve durable solutions»***

Currently, the threat of large-scale spread of the virus among this vulnerable category of the population is very acute in the world. According to UNHCR, about 80% of refugees and almost all IDPs are in low-income countries, many of which have weak and overloaded health systems. In camps and reception centers for refugees experiencing an acute shortage of personal protective equipment and medicines the situation is unfavorable.

We share the concerns regarding the current situation with the spread of COVID-19 in the number of Middle East and North Africa countries. The greatest concern is the possibility of large-scale spread of the virus in crisis-affected Syria, Iraq and Libya, whose health systems have been severely affected, including as a result of armed conflicts, and should be supported.

In the African continent, where most refugees and IDPs live in harsh sanitary conditions, the difficult health situation is exacerbated by parallel outbreaks of measles, Ebola and diphtheria.

We proceed from the need to urgently provide full humanitarian assistance to refugees and IDPs who are the most vulnerable to coronavirus infection, as well as to the host countries. Moreover we consider unacceptable to use such assistance in political or other purposes, that are far from humanity and impartiality.

We also reaffirm the urgency of an immediate and complete denial form all kinds of trade wars, lifting unilateral sanctions and other restrictive measures that undermine the capacities of States to deploy an effective fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

We can't ignore the painstaking work done by the Moroccan Chairmanship on the development of the draft ECOSOC resolution, which we have to adopt this

year. We would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our colleagues both from the Permanent Mission of Morocco and from the UN OCHA.

We believe that no one has any illusions left that the online operating mode is not able to fully replace the traditional negotiation model. In the context of the UN and multilateral discussions, digitalization to a greater extent did not justify itself. Partly it is also to blame for the fact that delegations were not able to fully agree on a draft resolution that would meet the interests of the vast majority of countries. The draft resolution proposed for adoption is a very painful compromise. We would like to emphasize this fact.

At the same time, our delegation supports the resolution and we hope for a closer dialogue with partners next year.

Summing up. Let me wish everyone good health and patience in this continuous battle with pandemic.

I thank you.