



ECOSOC HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT

UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK 19-21 June 2018

Title: The Humanitarian Response in Yemen

Sponsors and Organizers: OCHA

Day and time: Wednesday, June 20th from 1.15 to 2.45

Place: Conference Room 12, United Nations Headquarters New York

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year's theme: *Restoring humanity, respecting human dignity and leaving no one behind: working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.*

Background and objectives

Yemen is now the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with 22.2 million people in need of assistance or protection – 3.4 million more than last year. This is the result of nearly three years of armed conflict as well as the severely exacerbated pre-crisis vulnerabilities and reversed prior progress in key sectors.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate with casualties caused by fighting, food insecurity, displacement, deteriorating essential social services including health care and education, outbreaks of cholera and diphtheria, and economic decline.

Yemen is one of the most food insecure countries in the world. Nearly 18 million people in Yemen are food insecure, including 8.4 million people who are severely food insecure, reliant on assistance to survive, and 10 million people who will slip into pre-famine conditions unless their household incomes increase.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners, in 2018, launched an international appeal for US\$2.96 billion to provide neutral and impartial life-saving assistance and protection to people in Yemen.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres convened a high-level pledging event for the Humanitarian crisis in Yemen on 3 April in Geneva, to raise urgently needed funds for the emergency response in Yemen and to draw global attention to the crisis.

The event was co-hosted by the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden. A total of US\$ 2.01 billion was pledged by 38 Member States, the European Commission and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

towards the humanitarian response in Yemen. If fully channeled through the Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen, the pledges represent almost 70% of identified humanitarian needs¹.

Discussion points

Building upon the success of the pledging event for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, the proposed side event aims to demonstrate what can be achieved when Member States allocate unearmarked funding to highly prioritised Humanitarian Response Plans. The event will showcase the effective strategies being used by the UN and its partners in Yemen to save millions of lives.

The event will articulate what is possible when humanitarian responses are funded – as evidenced by the recent contributions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the State of Kuwait at the high-level pledging event on Yemen. Footage from the field will reveal the impact of this funding on local communities and the type of humanitarian assistance received.

The side event will showcase prioritised, sequenced strategies as the most effective and efficient way of ensuring coordinated and principled humanitarian responses in the most difficult operating environments in the world.

The efficacy of pooled funds as a whole - both the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) and CERF will be highlighted during the side event, with a specific focus on the pooled fund as it supports the “local theme” for ECOSOC.

The event will convene UN Member States, international actors and humanitarian organizations and partners, and will provide an important opportunity to underline the magnitude of the crisis - including the importance of respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law, the need for unimpeded humanitarian access, and the urgency around the cessation of hostilities and a political solution for Yemen.

Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations

International attention on: i) the rapidly deteriorating situation in Yemen including the plight of civilians; ii) the importance of unearmarked allocations made by Member States towards the operation; and iii) improved understanding, trust and support towards the UN coordinated multilateral humanitarian system.

Member States and partners would be encouraged to continue to provide significant funding to the prioritized YHRP in 2018 and in coming years.

Format

The idea is to deliver a strikingly visual event showcasing recently captured footage from Yemen that clearly demonstrates the positive impact of life saving humanitarian assistance and services to the lives of those affected by the crisis, and how this would not be possible without the generous contribution of unearmarked funding made by Member States and partners.

¹ During the pledging event donors recognized the effectiveness of the pooled funds which was evidenced by contributions made by 13 donors to the YHF, while the CERF made its largest ever allocation of USD \$50 million to Yemen

Unlike the usual UN-style panel discussions, the event will be centered around visual and interactive presentations and discussions. Key components include:

1. Opening film
2. A ‘Ted Talk’ style presentation of the data and impact of humanitarian assistance
3. A ‘Davos’ style and moderated discussion on the Yemen crisis: 3-4 speakers with a moderator to further comment on the ‘Ted Talk’ style/data presentation and have an interactive discussion with the audience.
4. A photo exhibition at a prominent and proximate location to the event venue.

A ‘traditional panel’ approach should be discarded in favour of a modern and interactive approach modelled around Ted Talks², namely - where speakers talk like they talk, not how they write. During the speaker’s narrative, background visuals will be running to support the impact of the delivery.

Chair and moderator:

- Mark Lowcock; Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Panel composition:

- David Beasley; Executive Director World Food Programme
- UNICEF ED or WHO Director General
- International NGO
- Yemeni NGO - Yemen Humanitarian Fund

² TED-style talks are delivered without notes, from memory. They are not, as some people think, spontaneous; far from it! They are scripted and carefully rehearsed. In contrast, most business presenters use notes to deliver their speeches. TED-style talks are professionally visualized, meaning that someone who knows what they’re doing created well-crafted slides or a video.

Most business presentations are about conveying facts and expectations, not passions and possibilities. In contrast, TED-style talks are personal (the speaker feels passionate about something and/or there is a sense of purpose), they often take us on a journey, and they are concise.