**2019 Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council**

**High-Level Panel**

***Preparing for the future in the face of climate change and weather-related disasters: strengthening preparedness and humanitarian response and collaborating to build resilience and address escalating risks and challenges***

**Tuesday 25 June, 15:00-17:30, Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Background and theme**

As evidenced by recent major disasters across the world, climate- and weather-related disasters already exert a heavy toll on communities and this burden is only expected to grow. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018 Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C brings a new sense of urgency for our efforts. If the 1.5°C and 2°C thresholds are breached, the possibilities to adapt will decline dramatically and is likely to unleash displacement, migration and humanitarian needs on an unprecedented scale. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned the world is facing "a direct existential threat" and must change course by 2020 to avoid runaway climate change and its devastating consequences. The United Nations Climate Action Summit will mobilize high-level commitment and raise ambition for the achievement of the Paris Agreement and galvanize transformative action and partnerships, including on resilience and adaptation to scale up global efforts to address and manage the risks and impacts of climate change, particularly in the most vulnerable communities and nations. Failure to adequately address climate change has enormous humanitarian implications – it is simply not an option.

Climate risks and challenges will affect the future of humanitarian action, by increasing the humanitarian needs, vulnerability and suffering of people, and by threatening to stretch and overwhelm the capacities of affected countries and humanitarian organizations to effectively respond and reach those in need. Increasingly severe and frequent disasters leave less time for communities to fully recover from disasters, rebuild their resilience and resume progress toward SDGs before disasters strike again and result in a vicious circle of risk, vulnerability and need.

**Objectives**

The high-level panel will discuss ways for the humanitarian system to better prepare for and respond to escalating climate and disaster risks and the impact of increasingly severe and frequent extreme weather events, and how the system can cope with the increasing strain and demand on its capacities. The discussion will seek to identify effective strategies and anticipatory approaches and highlight recent lessons and best practices and new approaches in preparedness, early warning and early action, resilient recovery and risk-informed sustainable development in the most vulnerable communities and countries where the adverse impacts of climate change are already a grim reality. The panel will investigate ways to effectively meet the needs and rights of people affected and displaced by disasters and climate change and ensure no one is left behind.

The discussion will focus on the need and opportunities for humanitarian actors to work differently and scale up their ambition, outcomes and collaboration with development, disaster risk reduction, human rights and climate actors with a view to reducing need, risk and vulnerability in the short, medium and long term. It will explore ways for humanitarian actors and partners to strengthen planning and programming in preparedness and response, including through the use of technology, risk analysis and data, predictive analytics, forecasting and early warning. The panel will also explore the enabling role of leadership, financing and partnerships.

**Guiding questions**

* What are the current main obstacles, gaps and shortcomings related to the effectiveness of preparedness for and response to disasters and the adverse impacts of climate at the global, regional, national and local level?
* What are the best practices, opportunities and solutions the humanitarian system and its partners need to scale up to strengthen disaster risk management efforts in the face of escalating risks? How can donors, affected countries and humanitarian and development organizations increase the level of ambition and investment in this regard? What are some of the new instruments, financing solutions and partnerships required to meet the challenge of escalating disaster risks and impacts, and how can we best leverage them?
* How can the humanitarian system, while expected to continue to respond to multiple protracted crises, maintain sufficient capacity and readiness to also address the risks and impacts of disasters and climate change?
* How can humanitarian, development, disaster risk reduction, human rights and climate actors work better together and achieve effective outcomes for the most vulnerable and in leaving no one behind? What opportunities and options SDG13 provides? How can we ensure recovery and sustainable development efforts succeed in building resilience to future disasters? How can we best prevent, prepare for and respond to displacement in the context of disasters and climate change? How should humanitarian actors and partners address the human rights implications of climate change?
* What opportunities does technology present for strengthening disaster preparedness and response for slow- and sudden-onset disasters? How should the humanitarian system increase its application of climate science, seasonal climate outlooks, weather forecasts and other hydro-meteorological services in the short, medium and long term?
* How can humanitarian actors best contribute to the United Nations Climate Summit and the implementation of its outcomes? How can we build further momentum for the ongoing shift toward anticipatory approaches and resilience building?

**Chair**

* H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco and Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council

**Moderator**

* Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator

**Panel speakers**

* Mr. Elhadj As Sy, Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
* Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
* Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction [TBC]
* Ms. Augusta Maita, Director-General, National Institute of Disaster Management, Mozambique
* Ms. Monique Pariat, Director-General, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
* Ms. Adelina Kamal, Executive Director, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management