

**ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment High-Level Panel on “Innovation as a driver of change: the use of new and emerging technologies and humanitarian data”**

**Thursday 24 June, 10:00am – 12:00pm, Geneva, Hybrid format**

**Opening Remarks for H.E. Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations and Vice-President of ECOSOC**

*Check against delivery*

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome you to the second high-level panel at the 2021 Humanitarian Affairs Segment focusing on innovation as a driver of change: the use of new and emerging technologies and humanitarian data.

We have an exciting and experienced high level panel with us today to explore the lessons learned from the past year, to share knowledge and best practices, to let us better understand opportunities and risks; and to discuss which steps the humanitarian sector and our partners need to take to harness technology and data to better serve the most vulnerable people.

We know that innovation and the use of data and their smart deployment is especially important now to strengthen, adapt and continue to modernize humanitarian action so that it is as effective and impactful as possible. One of the benefits of data can be to better predict and identify needs of beneficiaries, and to deploy new technologies to provide assistance safely, including for humanitarian workers to stay and deliver more effectively and efficiently when they work on the ground.

The COVID-19 crisis compelled humanitarians to adjust rapidly to meet evolving and growing needs of affected populations in a fast-changing landscape. New technologies and

innovative techniques are key part of how this adaptation is already making humanitarian action faster, more accessible, and more effective.

We know that we need to be deliberate about the way we collect and use data and innovation to benefit people affected by crises - this needs to be enabled through advancing the protection and responsible use of data in humanitarian action. And I look forward to hearing today what we need to do to safeguard against related risks, especially to protect beneficiaries from its misuse; and how we can combat phenomena like misinformation and disinformation.

As we all know, we can only tackle the challenges and reap the full benefits that come with new technologies, smart techniques and humanitarian data when we work together. That's why this discussion in ECOSOC is so crucial. We will today dig deeper into areas where we have made progress and explore where we need to be investing to build more capacity and to use that capacity to improve conditions on the ground and support communities before humanitarian emergencies become major calamities or catastrophic disasters, epidemics and pandemics, something we have been witnessing over the last year. Identifying lessons learned, sharing best practices and strategies for mitigating risk are essential to long-term success reaping the collective benefits of innovation for a more effective and efficient humanitarian response. Inter-organizational leadership and collaboration is required to guide collective, sector-wide action and make the most out of data, technologies and innovation.

Finally, we are looking forward to our discussion today - with the direct experience of our panelists we will move from the abstract to the concrete; and we will hear how this directly impacts the lives. In all of this, we should also draw on our experiences of how technologies can be used to foster gender-responsive action and support local partners and build partnerships.