2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

Title
The World Humanitarian Summit – Countdown to Istanbul
Voices for Change

19 June 2015
12:30-14:30
Room XXI, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness. It is also an opportune moment to demonstrate the different voices that are calling for action ahead of the Global Consultation in October and the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016.

Background and objectives

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit has been convened by the UN Secretary-General to generate strong global support for bold changes in humanitarian action. Global humanitarian action encompasses many actors. First and foremost are the affected communities, who are the first responders. Major roles are also played by Governments, civil society, NGOs, the corporate sector, UN agencies, academics, diaspora networks and others. The World Humanitarian Summit will therefore be inclusive and wide-ranging in order to capitalize on our respective strengths and to come up with the new thinking that is needed.

At the time of ECOSOC HAS 2015, there will have been six regional consultations in the lead-up to the Summit. This is the first time that a diverse and inclusive range of humanitarian actors have come together at this scale to discuss the future humanitarian agenda. The consultations have been rich and diverse. We have consulted in person and online with people affected by crises, community-based groups, private sector organizations, diaspora networks, academia and youth groups.

With the last regional consultation for the WHS in July 2015, the consultations are beginning to converge around the building blocks of a vision for future humanitarian action. The UN Secretary-General has highlighted four critical areas for transformational change:

i. **Getting it right in conflicts**: confronting violations of International Humanitarian Law and finding new ways to protect and assist people in conflict;

ii. **Financing for the future**: global action to address the funding gap between growing humanitarian needs and the resources available to meet them;

iii. **Forging new pathways to resilience**: developing new approaches for managing recurrent and protracted crises; and contextualizing preparedness and response;
iv. **Creating more inclusive, effective and diverse humanitarian system:** ensuring affected people, particularly women, have a stronger voice and greater role in humanitarian action; adapting the humanitarian system to new contexts, actors and challenges; and creating an enabling environment and investment in innovation to better deal with current and future humanitarian challenges.

This panel will bring in leaders representing some of the diverse constituencies who have been engaged in the process to share their perspectives on the bold changes that are needed to meet the enormous challenges we face in the coming years and decades.

The objectives of the side-event are to showcase the diversity of perspectives that have emerged from this wide-ranging consultation process; to highlight opportunities for mutual cooperation and collaboration; and to explore the vision for a more inclusive, diverse and truly global humanitarian system.

**Discussion points**
Against this backdrop, the side-event will focus on the following suggested questions:

1. How do you think humanitarian action should be different five years from now?
2. What key changes are needed from governments, the multi-lateral system and civil society?
3. What would be most disappointing if it didn’t happen?

**Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations**
Key issues and recommendations identified at the side-event will help to identify some of the changes we must undertake at the global, regional and national levels in order to commit to a new vision for humanitarian action. The outcomes will feed into the Global Consultation in October 2015.

**Format**
Moderated panel discussion.

**Chair:**
- Under-Secretary-General and ERC, Mr. Stephen O’Brien (TBC)

**Co-sponsors:**
- Mexico.
- Co-sponsor TBC.

**Moderator:**
- Ms. Martha Maznevski, IMD Business School.

**Panel composition:**
- Mr. Hesham Youssef, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- Ms. Ilwad Elman, Director of Programmes and Development, Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre.
- Ms. Zeynep Ozbil, Director of Corporate Citizenship, Turkcell.
- A representative from the Red Cross TBC.
Contact
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