Concept note on 2014 ECOSOC event side event: Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow

Risk-informed leadership for crisis prevention

When: 23 June 2014
Time: 1:15pm – 2:30pm
Where: Conf. room 7 North Lawn Building, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Organizers: OCHA and the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN

Overview
Over the past decade, the number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled. Meanwhile, funding requirements have more than trebled to 12.9 billion a year, an increase of 430% between 2004 and 2013. The rising scale of crises, our collective inability to resolve protracted disasters, and the interplay of new global challenges – such as water scarcity, climate change, food price volatility and rapid urbanization – have led to a global deficit in the operational and financial capacity of governments and humanitarian organizations to respond. Humanitarian organizations are being asked to respond in more places, for longer periods of time, and at greater cost than ever before. OCHA’s new report Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow highlights that there is insufficient capacity among humanitarian leaders of humanitarian organizations to act on the basis of available humanitarian risk analysis. Information is available but it does not always translate into action. This is partly because of underlying financial structures do not allow for it, but it is also due to institutional and behavioural obstacles. These trends have created an overwhelming need for enhanced investment in risk mitigation and crisis management, but existing mechanisms are not capacitated or structured to respond. This gap is leaving millions vulnerable to predictable, and in some cases preventable, humanitarian crises.

Why now?
The world is gearing up to create a new global development framework after 2015, a new agreement to replace the Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and the World Humanitarian Summit is scheduled for 2016, in which managing risk will be one of the four main themes. The months ahead provide a once in a generation opportunity to shape the international system and to embed disaster risk management in humanitarian response and prevention.

Objective
The event will ask a select group of speakers, including a Regional Humanitarian coordinator, to share their experiences managing recent rapid onset and slow onset emergencies and how they have dealt with the challenges and opportunities of integrating crisis risk management in their operations. The analysis presented in Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow will support the debate. The questions to be addressed will include: How can the humanitarian system adapt to prevent, reduce the risks and mitigate residual risks of emerging global challenged such as climate change, rapid urbanization, population growth, water scarcity and their compound effects? How can the perspective and lessons learned from senior humanitarian leadership be taken into account in the post-2015, WHD and HFA2 discussions? What are the ways to overcome political, behavioural and institutional barriers hindering the capacity of cities and countries to manage risks more effectively?

Audience
Member States delegates; humanitarian, development and DRR actors; donors; foundations and think tanks; and other ECOSOC delegates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Presenter/Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:15pm</td>
<td>Opening remarks</td>
<td>Ms. Ulla Næsby Tawiah, Deputy Head of Department for Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark</td>
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<td>1:25pm</td>
<td>Presentation of the report</td>
<td>Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, Chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch, UNOCHA</td>
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| 1:35pm| Moderated debate                    | Moderator: Ms. Florika Fink-Hooijer, Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission  
- Mr. Nigel Fisher, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis  
- Mr. Kelly R McKinney, Chief Disaster Officer, American Red Cross  
- Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, Chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch, UNOCHA |
| 2:15pm| Closing remarks                     | Wrap-up                                                                          |
| 2:30pm| End of the session                  |                                                                                  |

**Contact**
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