2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

The Power of Business in Emergencies – Working together in Preparedness and Response
08.15-09.45
Thursday 18 June 2015
Room XXIV, 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.

Background and objectives
The private sector is playing an increasing role in humanitarian action. SME’s and MNC’s are important components of the local communities and are directly affected by emergencies. Their markets, employees, infrastructure and supply chains may all be disrupted. The business role in emergency preparedness and response has evolved from being motivated by public relations charitable contributions and donations to a growing recognition that it is a core of business interest. Innovative approaches and new public private partnerships are enabling companies to leverage their core competencies in support of humanitarian action.

In an effort to find synergies and enhance engagement, through identification of issues and agreeing on solutions and commitments, OCHA has been running regional, national, industry specific and thematic Business Consultations in 2014 and 2015. These are integrated into the WHS process and will feed into the Secretary-General’s report to Istanbul.

The event will focus on the role of Government in creating enabling environments for enhanced and more efficient private sector engagement in humanitarian action. It will discuss how to engage private sector at operational levels, how to create networks and platforms as well as the broad principles, charters and regulatory environments necessary.

If the future humanitarian model aims to effectively collaborate with the private sector, it is crucial for Governments to initiate the discussion on enabling environments and to share good practices and lessons.

Discussion points
Against this backdrop, the side-event will focus on the following suggested questions:
• What are the main challenges to private sector engagement in humanitarian action?
• What are the main challenges for businesses affected by emergencies?
• What can Governments do to create an enabling environment in their countries?

Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations
This side-event will bring together a panel of private sector and member states to discuss the crucial role of Government in creating an enabling environment for private sector engagement in humanitarian action as well as to explore measures that Governments can take to limit adverse impact of emergencies on their local economies.
It provides an opportunity to hear and take stock of recent private sector initiatives in humanitarian action, of the discussions that have taken place in the WHS Business Consultations, and to hear directly from the private sector.

**Format**
A panel discussion followed by an interactive dialogue.

**Chair:**
- *Gwi-Yeop Son, Director, Corporate Programmes Division (CPD), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)*

**Panel composition:**
- *Martin Harris, Director of Technology for Mobile for Development at GSMA*
- *Alan Knight, Corporate Responsibility General Manager at ArcelorMittal and Chair of the Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group*
- *Representative of the Government of the Philippines*

**Contact**
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