2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

High-Level Panel on “Addressing Capacity and Resource Challenges through Humanitarian Financing”

Thursday 18 June 2015; From 15:00 – 17:00
Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

This is one of two panels 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. The objective is to discuss the main international challenges to humanitarian affairs and how to confront those challenges.

Background and theme
The international humanitarian system is currently serving more people and at a much greater cost than ever before. The amount of affected people targeted has nearly doubled in the past decade, while funding requirements for 2015 are six times higher than when the Humanitarian Reform was launched. Some of the drivers of humanitarian aid cost include rising insecurity for aid workers, assumptions about poor national capacity when planning an inter-agency appeal, discrepancies in measuring need and costing projects from country to country, aid bureaucracy and global economic fluctuations. While the over $10 billion donors provided for 2014 humanitarian appeals was an all-time high, so too was the $6.9 billion shortfall. Under current projections, the number of people requiring assistance, at greater cost, will grow, further amplifying this gap. Conversely, there is also some predictability in where the funding is required. Six countries have had continuous appeals for 10 years and until 2013, crises in Sudan, DR Congo, and Somalia accounted for 50% of all appeal funding. Since 2013, these countries have been overshadowed by the Syria and Iraq crises (which now account for approximately 50% of funding).

Over the past few years, food assistance has consistently been the best funded sector, while early recovery, agriculture and protection, i.e. the sectors that aim to address underlying vulnerability, rank among the least funded. This dichotomy – rising funding requirements and people targeted versus prolonged crises – raises questions about the cost of aid, the ability of the multi-lateral system to alleviate suffering and the future of humanitarian assistance.

Another significant feature of the new landscape is the length of crises. Some 90 percent of countries for which an appeal is issued have it for three years consecutively. On average, a country will have an appeal for seven years. While an increasing number of plans recognize that crises are prolonged----ten appeals for 2015 include multi-year strategies----much more work needs to be done to ensure closer links between humanitarian and development actors so that needs are driven down over time, and humanitarians can scale down sooner.

Beyond the well-documented “Relief-Development divide”, there are growing calls for a more inclusive humanitarian financing system. Some Member States are calling for greater transparency on the use of humanitarian funding in their countries. National and International NGOs want more direct access to bilateral and pooled funding. At the same time, generous donors are looking for greater efficiency and accountability.
Format

Chair: H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Vice President of ECOSOC

Moderator: Mr. Stephen O’Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Panelists:
- Mr. Bård Glad Pedersen, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Mr. Michel Lies, CEO, Swiss Re
- Dr. Richard Wilcox, interim Director General, African Risk Capacity (ARC)
- Member of Secretary-General’s Panel on Humanitarian Financing
- Mr. Kevin Jenkins, CEO, World Vision International

Objectives
Against this backdrop, the High-Level Panel will focus on the following suggested questions to discuss the issue of humanitarian financing; both as a challenge in terms of securing sufficient resources and as an opportunity to invest in solutions to reduce need and improve response:

- How can the growing trend of multi-year plans be made more effective in reducing need over time?
- Could alternative funding streams be considered to fund the “gap areas” between prevention, emergency aid, and recovery?
- Could greater flexibility in funding, including to local partners, enhance our capacity to deliver without compromising accountability?

Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations
- Share some of the initial thinking from the research and consultations undertaken as part of the World Humanitarian Summit
- Influence the thinking of the SG’s High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing