2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
Aid effectiveness: saving lives together

Sponsors: Canada, Germany and Denmark
Organizers: Switzerland, The Sphere Project, CHS Alliance and SCHR
When: 18 June from 17.15 to 18.30
Where: Room XXIII, 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

Increasing humanitarian needs, prolonged protracted crises, more frequent and severe natural disasters, and the regionalization of complex emergencies, call for more predictable and coordinated humanitarian action, where diverse international, regional, national, and local responders work in close partnership, building on complementarity and specific added value.

Over the past 20 years, humanitarian actors have developed a number of initiatives to promote greater relevance and efficiency of the humanitarian response itself, while strongly advocating that people affected by crisis should be better included in both the design and monitoring of humanitarian action. The driving forces behind such initiatives are the recognition that without solid buy-in of affected populations, the response will not be as effective, and also that different stakeholders – affected States, donors, international organizations, civil society organizations – need to work closely together to achieve an effective overall response. With the shared goal of improving the quality of humanitarian action and the accountability of humanitarian organizations to people affected by crisis, this collaboration is essential to alleviating suffering and optimizing the use of all available resources.

The main objective of this session is to inform participants’ reflections on humanitarian effectiveness and collaboration by facilitating an open dialogue on whether or not, and if so how, a common set of standards for humanitarian action can support more effective responses, improve collaboration between a diverse community of actors and enhance accountability of humanitarian organization to affected populations.

Discussion points

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

1. In which way has having a common reference framework (The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, the Sphere standards, Humanitarian Accountability Programme (HAP) Standard, etc) supported effective multi-stakeholder humanitarian action and accountability of organizations to affected populations?
2. Have there been any drawbacks or negative consequences to using such frameworks in practice? How have these been managed or addressed in operation reality?
3. Can a common humanitarian standard such as the Core Humanitarian Standard, contribute to further improvements, in terms of inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness?
4. Could objective verification and certification of organizations compliance against their commitments contribute to such improvements?
Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations

Although there will be no formal conclusions from the event, the participants will have heard perspectives from State representatives and operational humanitarian organizations on the impact of standards and common frameworks for humanitarian action; both positive contributions and challenging drawbacks will have been explored. This will help inform participants’ own approach to preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit, and their own engagement in humanitarian policy and operations.

Format

The side-event will be presented as an interactive discussion among 4 panelists, and a Chair acting as well as a moderator. Sufficient time will be allowed for statements as well as Q&A with the audience.

Chair and Moderator:

- H.E. Manuel BESSLER, Vice-Director, Delegate for humanitarian aid and head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA)

Panel composition:

- H.E. M. Zamir AKRAM, Ambassador, Permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations office in Geneva
- Terry MOREL, Director, Division of Emergency, Security and Supply, UNHCR
- Mike PENROSE, Director General, Action Contre la Faim - France (ACF)
- Wolfgang JAMANN, Secretary General, CARE International

Background Material

On the Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief: http://www.ifrc.org/fr/publications/code-of-conduct/


On the Sphere standards: http://www.sphereproject.org/

On verification and certification: http://www.schr.info/certification

Contact

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