2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

Engaging communities affected by conflict
Government of Canada, World Vision and UN OCHA
Wednesday, 17 June: 8.15am – 9.45am
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
Community engagement (or communicating with disaster affected communities) is a growing field of work that helps to meet the information and communication needs of people affected by crisis, and to ensure that humanitarian response is more effective and accountable to beneficiaries.

In recent years, humanitarian organizations have increasingly set up initiatives and mechanisms to ensure two-way communications with and among communities affected by natural disasters. However, the implications and possibilities of communicating with communities in conflict settings are less well known because of its complexities. Yet, 80 % of humanitarian responses are in conflict settings.

This event will explore the challenges of communicating with communities in conflict affected settings and will draw on the implementation of programs in Northern Iraq (2014) and Ukraine (2015). Ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the event will also seek to build a better understanding among humanitarian actors of the importance of information as life-saving assistance and of collating and effectively responding to the feedback from affected communities.

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

1. How can information provision, feedback and participation lead to better accountability to people affected by conflict?
2. What unique challenges do conflict settings present for humanitarians to engage with affected people, and how can these be addressed?
3. What are examples of successful initiatives or mechanisms that have meaningfully engaged communities as part of a humanitarian response to conflict?

Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations
Recommendations made by the panelists will be captured in a short report which will be submitted to the World Humanitarian Summit, published online and shared with the humanitarian community.

Format
Panel discussion
Co-Chair & Introduction:
• Christian Clark, UN OCHA

Co-Chair & Moderator:
• Joshua Tabah, Counsellor, Humanitarian Affairs, Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN

Panel composition:
• Fatime Abdoulaye Izam and Idriss Moussa Saleh, Chad (formerly refugees in Central African Republic)
• Umelto Labetubun, Humanitarian Policy Advisor, World Vision Iraq
• Cédric Schweizer, ICRC head of delegation in Yemen from April 2013 to May 2015

Background Material

Iraq: inter-Agency rapid assessment report on IDP information needs:

Understanding information and Communications Needs among IDPs in Eastern Ukraine:
http://www.internews.org/research-publications/ukraine-trapped-propaganda-war-abandoned-frustrated-stigmatized

Contact
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