High-Level Humanitarian Event on South Sudan
25 September 2018, 11:00-12:30, Conference Room 5

Background

With the conflict in South Sudan in its fifth year, the humanitarian crisis continues to deepen. More than 7 million people need assistance and protection in 2018, and the already dire food insecurity situation is not likely to improve, so long as the parties to the conflict continue to clash and flout international humanitarian law. Two out of three pregnant or breastfeeding women are estimated to be acutely malnourished and more than 2 million South Sudanese children are out of school. Only one in ten people has access to basic sanitation. Within the confines of the dangerous operating environment – more than 100 aid workers have been killed since the conflict broke out in December 2013 – humanitarian partners endure significant risks to reach people in need and, remarkably, reached nearly 5.5 million people last year out of their 6 million target.

Issues and Significance

South Sudan is first and foremost a protection crisis, and civilians continue to be subjected to violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The country is also the most violent place in the world to deliver assistance and protection to people in need. Last year alone, over 600 humanitarian workers were forced to relocate for extended periods because of conflict and insecurity. Beyond physical risks – and in the context of conflict economy and constrained humanitarian access – tackling the fluid operating environment also calls for greater risk tolerance with respect to new, innovative ways in how needs are identified and met. While advocating for the conflict to end, aid agencies are adapting the way they work to more effectively and transparently understand and meet the needs of millions of people across the country. This calls for continuous attention to the voices of the people most affected by the conflict.

Outcome, Format, and Envisioned Programme

The event’s three-fold objectives are to amplify the voices of South Sudanese people affected by the conflict; to highlight challenges to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan and demonstrate how humanitarian organizations continue to take risks to overcome the fragile operating environment and meet people’s needs and to reinvigorate ongoing support to peacebuilding in South Sudan.

Mr. Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, will moderate a Davos-style conversation with representatives of humanitarian organizations. The speakers will include:

-Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee for Red Cross;
- Mr. Alain Noudéhou, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan;

- Ms. Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director (Operations), World Food Programme

- Ms. Angelina Nyajima, Director of Hope Restoration (South Sudan)

To maintain the event’s primary focus on conflict-affected people, panellists will have an opportunity to respond to pre-recorded questions and remarks posed by women, men and children in South Sudan, including South Sudanese aid workers, complemented by additional questions from the chair. Following the initial discussion among speakers, the floor will be opened for remarks.

The event will be webcast.