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**Summary record of the 40th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 19 June 2015, at 3 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Khiari (Vice-President)..... (Tunisia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Khiari (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance** (continued) (A/70/77-E/2015/64)

*General discussion* (continued)

1. **Mr. Hoscheit** (Observer for Luxembourg) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Improving the humanitarian situation in the world required enhancing the resilience of the affected communities. That implied, in particular, better assessment of needs, fee assessment mechanisms, respect for international humanitarian law, enhancement of the actors' capacities and better coordination among humanitarian, development and civil protection actors. As part of its presidency of the Council of the European Union, Luxembourg would endeavour to mainstream humanitarian requirements into European Union activities.

2. **Ms. Menéndez Pérez** (Observer for Spain) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union. No stabilization or development process could be successful as long as communities affected by conflicts or recurring crises did not exercise their basic rights. Moreover, where humanitarian access was not guaranteed, any efforts at the levels of logistics and financing would remain ineffective. Civilians, particularly women and children, should be protected, bearing in mind that humanitarian assistance could never replace political solutions.

3. **Mr. Karau** (Observer for Kenya) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of African States. An increase in the number of humanitarian actors was welcome provided that it did not hamper coordination, cause confusion, and thus undermine the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. It was therefore crucial that the beneficiary States should play a leading role in the planning and coordination of humanitarian action. It was also necessary to involve local actors in humanitarian activities, invest in building resilience and preventing conflicts, and seek political solutions to existing conflicts while ensuring respect for State sovereignty.

4. **Ms. O'Brien** (Observer for Ireland) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union. It

was necessary to develop humanitarian programmes adapted to the particular needs of men, women, girls and boys affected by crises; and to support the praiseworthy efforts of countries hosting refugees to assist the persons affected by conflicts. As part of preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit, Ireland would hold the Irish Humanitarian Summit in July 2015.

5. **Ms. Espinosa Garcés** (Observer for Ecuador) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The prolonged crises experienced by the world called for a new humanitarian programme. Six countries had been the subject of humanitarian appeals over a period of ten years. That attested to the need for a strategy aimed at entrusting humanitarian responsibilities to the development actors. The activities of international humanitarian actors should not replace but supplement the action of national actors.

6. **Mr. Batora** (Observer for Ethiopia) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the statement made on behalf of the Group of African States. Ethiopia was the African country hosting the greatest number of refugees, currently more than 670,000. Through political negotiations, the Ethiopian Government sought to help South Sudan to resolve the conflict prompting massive displacements of refugees. The international community should support the implementation of the Addis Ababa Commitment to Somali Refugees, adopted on 20 August 2014, by helping the Somali Government and the countries hosting the refugees.

7. **Mr. Wagner** (France) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Although it no longer sufficed to meet the current humanitarian crises, the existing humanitarian system did not need any radical transformation. Every organization should refocus on its core activities so as to avoid redundancies that undermined effectiveness on the ground. It was necessary to strengthen the system's inclusiveness through greater involvement of the regional, national and local actors, establish closer coordination between humanitarian and development actors, and identify new sources of financing.

8. **Ms. Pérez Alvarez** (Observer for Cuba) said that humanitarian assistance should be provided at the request and with the consent of the beneficiary States, and in accordance with the principles of sovereignty

and non-interference. The United Nations and the international community had an obligation to help the countries of the South to build their capacity to deal with crises. To that end, the developed countries should honour their commitments with regard to official development assistance. Humanitarian institutions should be strengthened on the ground and provided with state-of-the-art technology and additional financial and technical resources. Cuba was concerned that the preparation of the World Humanitarian Summit was moving farther and farther away from a transparent intergovernmental process open to all.

9. **Mr. Makwalela** (South Africa) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Resolved to reduce human suffering, his country contributed financially and materially to the resolution of humanitarian crises in the world. In recent years, South Africa had assisted Palestine, Chad, Somalia and Malawi; allocated rand 32.5 million to combating the Ebola epidemic; and, in cooperation with Ethiopia, organized one of the eight regional consultations on the World Humanitarian Summit. Humanitarian assistance was effective only if it promptly met the specific needs of countries affected by the crises. The Member States, the United Nations system and the humanitarian organizations should recognize the key role of relevant national and local authorities and institutions, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

10. **Ms. Gómez Guiffaro** (Honduras) said that, in stepping up efforts to meet humanitarian challenges, it was necessary to assign to the beneficiary State a key role in the organization, coordination and provision of humanitarian assistance. In that connection, the United Nations should facilitate inter-State cooperation in order to strengthen the activities, projects and programmes implemented. Politicization of humanitarian action must be avoided. In promoting humanitarian financing, needs should be prioritized on the basis of urgency, and linkages with the financing mechanisms should be strengthened with a view to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable population groups.

11. **Mr. Mushayavanhu** (Zimbabwe) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of African States and the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The current humanitarian crises called for redesigning the preparation for disasters, seeking in particular an ever greater reduction of disaster risks

and a shift from aid and recovery operations to action conducive to development. Linkages between the international humanitarian framework and the post-2015 development agenda should be strengthened. From the natural disasters that had struck it, his country had drawn lessons, particularly with regard to the need for combating drought through irrigation and for coordinating humanitarian action better. In that connection, he welcomed the memorandum of understanding concluded between the Southern Africa Development Community and the United Nations in October 2014.

12. **Mr. Mercado** (Argentina) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Since humanitarian assistance continued to increase, Argentina sought new ways to reduce disaster risks, deal with disasters and mitigate their impact. It was in that spirit that it took part in the development, in particular, of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Generally speaking, Argentina was prepared to participate in humanitarian activities on the basis of cooperation, solidarity and community participation. The country's cross-cutting and democratic approach to humanitarian assistance was based on comprehensive risk management and took account of vulnerabilities, thereby facilitating the preparation of prevention tools.

13. **Mr. Wibowo** (Observer for Indonesia) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was necessary to develop an ambitious awareness-raising strategy in order to apply international humanitarian law more effectively, assess the existing institutional capacity at all levels, including the United Nations system, satisfy the needs of population groups affected by humanitarian crises, ensure that the United Nations humanitarian system had the capacity and resources needed to accomplish its mission, and identify new ways to reduce the financing gap and improve the coordination and accountability mechanisms.

14. **Mr. Aala** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country was the target of terrorist attacks on civilian infrastructure and the urban areas. That had led part of the population to flee the country. In order to change that situation, foreign financial assistance should end. Contrary to allegations, the Syrian Government cooperated with the United Nations system, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and NGOs in

providing assistance to four million people every month. The main obstacle was terrorist organizations, which prevented citizens from accessing such assistance. Resolution 46/182 of the General Assembly, according to which humanitarian actors were expected to respect national sovereignty, was not always observed. Deliberate misinformation and politicization created an inaccurate image of Syria. Resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014) of the Security Council went unheeded, especially because of lack of transparency in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It was regrettable that certain neighbouring countries used the routes followed by humanitarian assistance to bring in weapons. In conclusion, it was necessary to meet the population's needs while fighting against economic measures which violated humanitarian law.

15. **Mr. Fos** (Observer for Philippines) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Her country attached great importance to humanitarian activities, which should not only compensate economic losses arising from disasters, but also combat factors that endangered the life of its citizens. Use should be made of the actors' complementarity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, particularly in conjunction with the sustainable development goals, in order to strengthen resilience at all levels. All stakeholders had an obligation to promote humanitarian activities, especially by addressing the fundamental causes of conflicts in order to end dependence on assistance during lasting crises and by establishing flexible systems to finance sustainable development and strengthen the communities' resilience.

16. **Ms. Londoño Soto** (Colombia) endorsed the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report in relation to the need for organizing comprehensive and specific humanitarian responses taking into account the context and needs of the affected communities. Establishing assistance priorities and methods was primarily the responsibility of the State. Colombia currently had a full system for meeting the needs of population groups affected by internal conflict or natural disasters. In 2014, 1,256,000 persons had received assistance. Under the Victims and Land Restitution Act of 2012, 500,000 persons had been compensated. In conclusion, she welcomed all efforts aimed at specific and sustainable results.

17. **Mr. Zupanjevac** (Serbia) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union. The number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons had exceeded 50 million for the first time and was testing the capacity of the United Nations to provide an appropriate response, especially since humanitarian workers continued to be targeted by terrorist organizations. Ways should be sought to bridge the gap between humanitarian needs and the funds allocated. Serbia hosted the greatest number of refugees and long-term internally displaced persons in Europe. Numerous migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Asia who wished to join Europe crossed the country. He called for solidarity and, especially, for an end to conflicts in the migrants' home countries and for the creation of conditions favourable to stability, growth and development. Lastly, the floods without precedent in 120 years that Serbia had experienced in 2014 had affected 22 per cent of the population and caused damage assessed at 4.8 per cent of GDP.

18. **Mr. Andreev** (Russian Federation) said that, in the period 2014-2015, his country had paid US\$ 50 million in response to appeals launched by the United Nations for many countries. There was a need for better coordination of international humanitarian efforts. Governments played a key role in channelling and coordinating humanitarian assistance in their territory because they best knew the needs of their population. More effective coordination between international and regional mechanisms was necessary in the face of disasters. Both the humanitarian workers and the civilian population should be protected. To that end, international humanitarian law and cooperation with ICRC should be strengthened with a view to taking a depoliticized view of the issues involved. Lastly, the sanctions imposed, for instance through Security Council resolutions aggravated the situation of the civilian population.

19. **Mr. Dhital** (Nepal) said that the system for humanitarian action was confronted with ever greater difficulties because of the increasing number of conflicts and disasters, and that poor and vulnerable communities were often those most severely affected. The principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence should be respected by all humanitarian actors, while the local context and particular needs must be taken into account, bearing in mind the sustainable development goals. Special attention should be paid to the least developed countries, and

their capacities and resilience must be strengthened. The promotion of an effective global partnership and of international cooperation was crucial. The earthquake that had devastated the country in April 2015 had rendered 2.8 million persons dependent on humanitarian assistance. As a result, Nepal was unable to attain the MDGs in a timely manner. His Government endeavoured to coordinate the humanitarian actors so as to ensure an equitable distribution of assistance. Having drawn up an assessment of post-disaster needs, his Government was holding on 25 June 2015 an international conference on rebuilding the country.

20. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Humanitarian assistance should further comply with resolution 46/182 of the General Assembly and the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. The United Nations system and the international community must work with the Member States on strengthening cooperation between all humanitarian actors. Immediately after the earthquake that had devastated Nepal, Bangladesh had sent a medical team to that country and had made its own infrastructure available so that humanitarian assistance could be forwarded promptly. At the national level, considerable progress had been made in terms of including the reduction of disaster risks to which the country was particularly exposed in public policies and development plans and programmes.

21. **Ms. Majali** (Observer for Jordan) stressed the significance of the segment for her country because two of its neighbours, Syria and Iraq, were in level 3 emergency situations and more than 1,400,000 Syrians had taken refuge in Jordan. Despite the international community's support, the influx and presence of those refugees weighed heavily on her country's social and economic situation. Jordanian authorities had prepared plans and programmes for supporting the local population and the refugees but there was a lack of financing. As a member of the Security Council, her country had co-sponsored two resolutions on the access of humanitarian assistance to Syria and would continue its efforts to provide emergency assistance to hundreds of thousands of persons. Jordan actively participated in the preparation of the World Humanitarian Summit and considered respect for international humanitarian law to be crucial to the provision of protection during armed conflicts.

22. **Mr. Thongphakdi** (Observer for Thailand) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. According to the Secretary-General's report, the duration and frequency of crises were increasing. It was therefore urgent that the international community should find a balance between emergency assistance and long-term solutions. A country could not deal alone with the situation regarding migrants at sea. Accordingly, in May 2015 Thailand had organized a special meeting on irregular migration in the Indian Ocean. Short- and long-term solutions had been proposed during that meeting.

23. **Mr. Guesalaga** (Observer for Chile) noted that the living conditions of millions of persons were deteriorating because of, inter alia, wars, crises and disasters, and that the capacity limits of the humanitarian system had been attained. It was accordingly necessary to strengthen training for humanitarian workers and to improve compliance with international humanitarian law. The specialized agencies should be allowed to distribute financial resources according to existing needs. It was also necessary to combine assistance with development programmes and to take advantage of the available means of communication and the social media, particularly as early warning mechanisms.

24. **Mr. Dalcero** (Brazil) endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He reaffirmed his country's attachment to the Guatemala Declaration and noted the complementarity of humanitarian and development action underscored in the Secretary-General's report. Preventive action and development activities, such as the family allowances programme launched in Brazil, made it possible to improve the living conditions of the poorest and to accelerate recovery after a disaster. His country participated in various relevant initiatives, particularly in Africa and Haiti, and worked towards the attainment of the sustainable development goals.

25. **Mr. Gyrha** (Observer for the Holy See) noted that the number of humanitarian crises had increased in recent years. Crises due to natural phenomena, such as climate changes, undermined the exercise of a number of fundamental rights and called for the application of the principle of non-refoulement which would enable the affected population groups to seek protection, at least temporarily, in a foreign territory. In the case of crises due to human acts, the parties to armed conflicts

must ensure that the civilian population had full and secure access to humanitarian assistance.

26. **Mr. Martin** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) drew attention to the extent and complexity of humanitarian needs in relation to armed conflicts. Although it had almost doubled in 10 years, humanitarian assistance remained insufficient. Humanitarian actors were obliged to fulfil extraordinary tasks, such as providing basic public services and protecting the civilian population during an armed conflict, which were normally incumbent upon the States concerned. In addition to such failure, those States often made the work of humanitarian organizations difficult or even impossible, preventing them even from simply assessing the population's needs. Accordingly, it was in the interest of local actors that were directly exposed to political pressures to cooperate with international organizations, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which had substantial human and operational resources. Humanitarian assistance actors should display a more objective and critical attitude, and acknowledge and seek to remedy their weaknesses, given that the criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of assistance was the actual improvement of living conditions on the ground.

27. **Ms. Maze** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that international migrants, who often were those most affected by humanitarian crises, should receive assistance equivalent to the help provided to internal refugees and displaced persons. That required extensive and simultaneous action in the countries of origin, transit and destination in order to meet the immediate humanitarian needs and address the underlying causes of irregular migration.

28. **Mr. KUMAR** (India) stressed the need for national and regional capacity-building, use of local knowledge and skills, and improved evaluation, planning and coordination of humanitarian assistance.

29. **Mr. Cotte** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) presented the "One Billion Coalition for Resilience", a multi-party and multi-level initiative launched in November 2014 and aimed at ensuring that, in 10 years, every household in the world would include at least one person who would actively contribute to improving community resilience.

30. **Ms. Pictet-Althann** (Sovereign Order of Malta) expressed the hope that in 2016 the World Humanitarian Summit would lay the foundations for a new international humanitarian system. In July 2015, a summary report of the "Religions Together for Humanitarian Action" symposium would be submitted for consideration to the secretariat of the Summit.

31. **Mr. Türk** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the humanitarian system was being tested to the extreme. In 2014, the simultaneous crises in Iraq, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Syria alone had mobilized 40 per cent of the human and financial capacities of the Office. In view of that situation, he favoured concerted substantive action. In that connection, he welcomed the adoption of the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations.

32. **Ms. Hamid** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) noted that women and girls were the primary victims of humanitarian crises, which affected their security, health and well-being. She reaffirmed the resolve of the Fund to strengthen resilience by further promoting sexual and reproductive health, facilitating the communication of information and helping to combat violence against women.

33. **Ms. Wannous** (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)) said that the Office was prepared to cooperate with the Member States and the other stakeholders in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and, in particular, in improving preparedness for disasters.

34. **Mr. Khan** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that UNICEF currently participated in 294 humanitarian activities in 98 countries and was struggling to meet the needs of approximately 230 million children living in conflict areas. He reminded all parties to a conflict throughout the world of their obligation to comply with international humanitarian law.

35. **Ms. Kavun** (Observer for Ukraine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Russia did not respect its commitments with regard to Ukraine, preventing the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the supply of water and gas. She called for a new international solidarity movement, particularly for the provision of medical equipment, and noted that humanitarian assistance would cease to be needed upon

the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Ukrainian territory.

36. **Mr. Andreev** (Russian Federation) regretted that Ukraine used international meetings to shift onto Russia the responsibility for the crisis currently experienced by Ukraine and caused essentially by internal factors. The Economic and Social Council was not the appropriate body for seeking a solution to the Ukrainian conflict.

*Draft Resolution E/2015/L.15: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*

37. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

38. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

*Closing remarks by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator*

39. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) drew the following three lessons from the three-day segment: national authorities should play a central role in humanitarian activities, humanitarian and development action should be combined, and the local communities should be mobilized. All that required financing that would be more substantial and, especially, more diversified, more foreseeable, longer-term, and allocated to a greater extent to prevention and resilience.

*Closing of the segment*

40. After an exchange of thanks and congratulations, **the President** closed the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2015 session of the Council.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*