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## 2022 session

23 July 2021–22 July 2022

### Humanitarian affairs segment

#### Summary record of the 29th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 23 June 2022, at 3 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Vice-President) . . . . . (Plurinational State of Bolivia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Kelapile (Botswana), Mr. Pary Rodriguez (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

**Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (continued)** (E/2022/50; E/2022/L.11)

1. **Mr. Keçeli** (Observer for Türkiye) said that failure to address the root causes of humanitarian crises continued to drive millions of people away from their homes, incurring heavy humanitarian and financial costs globally. Alleviating the suffering of people in need through sufficient and sustained humanitarian assistance was essential. Moreover, humanitarian aid must be transferred to those in need through the most direct routes, on the basis of humanitarian considerations and without politicization. In that regard, Türkiye called for the renewal of the mandate for the United Nations cross-border aid mechanism for Syria. Actions in addressing humanitarian needs should go beyond emergency assistance and have a longer term agenda for change and transformation. Existing tools should also be used, particularly accountability mechanisms, to enhance data collection and reporting on violations.

2. Refugees and migrants were among the most vulnerable populations globally. Ensuring their humane treatment and respecting their fundamental human rights was a moral and legal obligation for States. However, there were significant increases in practices such as pushbacks that risked the lives and well-being of refugees and migrants, in violation of international human rights obligations. Since 2020, the Turkish authorities had saved 4,000 people who had been beaten, thrown directly into the sea or left to freeze to death. Such activities must stop. Dignity, well-being and the rights of migrants and refugees must be upheld.

3. A new approach to international cooperation was required in order to deal with the repercussions of forced displacement. Greater international solidarity was needed in addressing emergency situations, as well as predictable and equitable responsibility sharing. Meanwhile, against the backdrop of a global rise in climate change-related disasters, prevention and risk reduction were key to effective disaster management. Awareness-raising and education were also important priorities under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Furthermore, natural disaster-related regional issues should be primarily addressed by the relevant countries.

4. **Mr. Sakowicz** (Observer for Poland) said that the current humanitarian affairs segment was taking place within an increasingly challenging context for the humanitarian system. The compounding effects of conflict, climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had caused an unprecedented rise in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. Those factors disproportionately affected the most vulnerable and pushed more people into extreme poverty, hindering implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. In Ukraine, the violence perpetrated by Russia against civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure was deeply disturbing. The appalling forced resettlement of the Ukrainian population by Russia constituted a crime that ran contrary to all humanitarian principles. Such actions demonstrated a total disregard for international law in general and international humanitarian law in particular. The international community must not let such violations go unpunished. Strengthening accountability and combating impunity were indispensable for delivering justice to victims, stopping further brutality and upholding the credibility of the international system, based on respect for the rule of law. The difficulty in accessing people in need in eastern Ukraine was a cause for concern. Humanitarian and medical workers must be respected and protected to ensure that aid could reach those in need. Pressure must be put on all those who did not respect that basic principle, both in Ukraine and globally, in any context where serious violations were taking place.

6. The impacts of the Russian war against Ukraine were already being felt beyond the European continent. The current food security crisis was not a result of the sanctions imposed on Russia but rather an effect of the ongoing Russian aggression itself, which aimed to disrupt the production and export of agricultural products from Ukraine. To tackle the crisis, cooperation was required to assess needs and to foster a humanitarian-development-peace nexus at the global, national and regional levels. Solidarity was crucial, including through cooperation with the Ukrainian Government to protect existing resources, as well as to identify new tools and transport routes. Poland was ready to continue cooperation with the international community in order to combat the food crisis, notably through development assistance. Humanitarian responses must be coordinated and coherent, prioritizing concrete actions based on respect for international humanitarian law.

7. **Mr. Schaare** (New Zealand) said that reinforcing global solidarity at the current time was critical. COVID-19 continued to disrupt global health systems and economies, compounding the humanitarian challenges posed by conflict and climate change. The pandemic had highlighted inequalities and exclusion, while also serving as a reminder of the resilience and adaptability of people worldwide. Meanwhile, climate change continued to pose a global threat, particularly to the safety and livelihood of small island developing States. Until the drivers of climate change were addressed and greater investments were made in strengthening resilience, intensified natural disasters would lead to increased loss of life and destruction, requiring expensive, large-scale responses.

8. The commitment of humanitarian workers who continued to provide life-saving assistance in complex environments was commendable. The violent targeting of humanitarian and medical workers in conflict settings persisted, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. All parties to conflict must respect international humanitarian law and the international community should hold perpetrators to account. Lamentably, the devastating effects of urbanized warfare for civilians and infrastructure were ongoing. Moreover, the extreme rise in humanitarian needs worldwide was putting pressure on an already stretched humanitarian system.

9. The impacts of the crisis in Ukraine were particularly challenging. As a result of the illegal and unprovoked invasion by Russia, the United Nations had documented millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, thousands of civilian casualties and hundreds of attacks on health-care facilities and personnel. However, the actual figures were likely to be much higher. Higher prices for food, fuel and fertilizer were directly linked to the conflict, exacerbating fragile situations and reducing the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide assistance.

10. Although budgets were currently under strain, it was no time to reduce or divert humanitarian resources. An effective response to escalating humanitarian need required global solidarity and international cooperation. New Zealand continued to play its part by providing multi-year and flexible core funding to humanitarian partners, complemented by earmarked contributions to specific crises. Sexual and reproductive health rights were crucial in all humanitarian contexts. Localization of humanitarian responses were also necessary, examples of which had been seen in the responses to Tropical Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu and the eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano in Tonga.

11. **Ms. Narváez Ojeda** (Chile) said that it was a matter of deep concern that 2022 had witnessed the highest number of armed conflicts since 1945. That fact, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global climate crises, had heightened poverty, inequality and food insecurity, complicating the establishment of concrete strategies and solutions for the transition from relief to development. Consequently, there were 9 million more people requiring humanitarian assistance than in 2021, 811 million people were undernourished and there was a risk of famine in 43 countries. In addition, over 30 million people had been displaced due to weather events.

12. The Latin American region was currently experiencing various types of humanitarian crises, including the negative impact of climate change and a migrant crisis that required urgent joint humanitarian responses. Against that backdrop, a comprehensive approach was needed, based on anticipatory action with differentiated short- and long-term strategies. The link between humanitarian action and the women and peace and security agenda was also key. The full and meaningful participation of women in all their diversity and of local non-governmental organizations in prevention and response strategies for humanitarian crises was crucial, as they had in-depth knowledge of the issues faced by their communities.

13. With regard to the impacts of the war in Ukraine on the rest of the world, there was limited time to avoid a food crisis in 2023, as underscored by the Secretary-General. In the light of the situation, it was essential to improve the response, prevention and preparation activities of humanitarian organizations. In terms of the climate crises, and considering the unpredictability of climate phenomena, humanitarian assistance should be focused on adaptation and mitigation of negative effects. Particular attention should be given to the implementation of such assistance in local contexts, where community leaders and rural and indigenous populations had significant contributions to make in terms of good practices and resilience. Lastly, the application of international humanitarian law was crucial for the protection of civilians, critical infrastructure and humanitarian workers.

14. **Ms. Petrocelli Rojas** (Panama) said that Latin America and the Caribbean was the second most susceptible region to natural disasters in the world and one of the most affected by climate change. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region had increased the number of people in extreme poverty to 86 million. According to the World Bank, if immediate measures were not taken in response to the climate crisis, 216 million people could be forced to become internally

displaced by 2050, 17 million of whom were in the Latin American region. Therefore, the current situation required urgent, comprehensive and joint efforts.

15. Panama was currently facing the effects of climate change in the form of droughts, floods, loss of biodiversity and rising sea levels. It had also witnessed the consequences of the displacement that separated entire families and communities, and had a multiplying effect on the pre-existing social inequality in the region. Moreover, according to the United Nations Children's Fund, the number of children and adolescents who had crossed the Darien Gap in Panama had doubled within a year. That was particularly concerning as such crossings involved various threats including sexual violence, the risk of trafficking and reduced access to health and education services. The Government of Panama had taken measures to combat crime and protect the lives of migrants, including the establishment of a humanitarian border security unit and the forging of new regional alliances, thereby providing more rapid assistance and saving more lives.

16. Her Government had established national plans for climate action and on gender and climate change. It had also made progress towards post-pandemic economic recovery and was leading initiatives related to humanitarian assistance and climate change, which depended on international cooperation. Multilateralism was key to bridging the significant gaps of inequality and guaranteeing a dignified life to all.

17. **Mr. Woodroffe** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation hoped the draft resolution on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2022/L.11), which was under consideration at the current meeting, would pass with consensus as a strong statement of collective support to humanitarian colleagues working in the most challenging of circumstances around the world. Global humanitarian need was at its highest level since the Second World War. In 2022, over 300 million people were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance, a fourfold increase since 2015. The United Kingdom would continue to support the humanitarian system, prioritizing humanitarian action through its new international development strategy. It was committed to providing £3 billion in support over the subsequent three years.

18. Nonetheless, funding alone was not enough and the scale of the challenge far exceeded the capacities of the humanitarian system. Therefore, prioritizing the people most in need was necessary. The United Kingdom was harnessing the power of science and technology to deliver more efficient and inclusive

solutions, including through artificial intelligence, modelling and satellite imagery, to better forecast disasters, and digital cash transfers to improve the efficiency of humanitarian support. Protecting those most at risk, especially women and girls, was also essential. His country was committed to tackling the most harmful consequences of inequality in crises, including gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and would continue to promote full respect for international humanitarian law and to advocate unimpeded access to those in need.

19. Anticipating future shocks and building resilience in long-term crises was crucial. The United Kingdom was working on the development of systems and institutions to that end, while also working with international financial institutions to diversify the expertise and funding channelled to humanitarian contexts. However, all such efforts would be undermined without the political will to end conflicts, including those taking place in Syria, Yemen and South Sudan. Furthermore, the severe humanitarian and long-term impacts of the war waged by Russia against Ukraine, together with its blockading of Ukrainian ports, could not be ignored; the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine must end.

20. **Mr. Dai Bing** (China) said that his delegation appreciated the tireless efforts of the United Nations and humanitarian agencies in coordinating and providing humanitarian assistance and addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, among other areas, and supported the leading role of the United Nations in humanitarian cooperation and the fight against the pandemic.

21. As COVID-19 continued to spread, geopolitical conflicts intensified, the problem of climate change became more pronounced, and the food and energy crises drew nearer, the international community should adhere to multilateralism, enhance cohesion and cooperation and collectively address humanitarian challenges, which were growing more serious by the day. In that regard, his delegation wished to emphasize several points.

22. First, all countries should strictly respect international law and the norms of international relations as well as the central role of countries receiving humanitarian assistance. Those providing such assistance must consistently observe the principles of humanitarianism, neutrality, impartiality and independence, respect the sovereignty of recipient countries, and not interfere in their internal affairs. Humanitarianism must not become politicized.

23. Second, investment should be made in long-term development to fundamentally reduce humanitarian needs. Global humanitarian crises were long term and their deep-seated origins included extreme poverty, unbalanced development and a lack of resources. The international community must effectively address short-term humanitarian needs while also prioritizing development, increasing investment and supporting developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

24. Third, it was important to enhance independent development capacities and strengthen the capabilities of developing countries. In view of the circumstances and needs of disaster-affected countries, the international community must scale up funding and technical assistance and enhance the capacities of developing countries to manage disaster risks and address climate change. Developed countries should fulfil their commitment of \$100 billion in climate funding annually.

25. China had provided 153 countries and 15 international organizations with vaccines and materials to combat the pandemic and had sent medical expert groups to 34 countries, thus making great contributions to pandemic control and the restarting of economic and social development. It had also provided robust support to other countries in such areas as natural disaster emergency aid, food assistance and famine relief, disaster recovery and reconstruction, and disaster prevention and mitigation capabilities. Together with the international community, China would make collective efforts in multilateral humanitarian assistance activities and continue to do all it could to support other countries in addressing humanitarian crises.

26. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that conflict, climate change and COVID-19 had created multifaceted and cascading humanitarian challenges. Meanwhile, the gap in required resources to meet humanitarian needs was continuing to widen. The current humanitarian affairs segment provided an important platform for sharing experiences and best practices for addressing humanitarian situations during the pandemic, as well as on mobilizing actions to better prepare for future challenges.

27. Addressing root causes and respecting international humanitarian law was paramount, while ensuring that the principles of neutrality and impartiality continued to guide humanitarian assistance. Local humanitarian actors played an important role and must be listened to and empowered. Moreover, assistance must be based on needs and local communities should be involved from the beginning, in order to build trust and to ensure support for post-crisis development.

Partnership was also crucial, between regional, national and international actors, in order to mobilize resources and refer humanitarian assistance to those most in need.

28. Investing in an early-warning system was key to building resilience. Science, technology, innovation and reliable data were also key for an informed decision-making process and early-warning systems. Having predictability helped to enhance preparedness for future humanitarian responses and enabled the mitigation of disasters.

29. **Mr. Konfourou** (Observer for Mali) said that the sanctions of the Economic Community of West African States and of the West African Economic and Monetary Union had exacerbated the already alarming humanitarian situation in Mali, which had been compounded by climate change, insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic. The combination of those factors explained why almost 7.5 million people were currently in need of humanitarian assistance in Mali, including the Malian refugees in neighbouring countries. In that regard, the Government of Mali had established assistance programmes for refugees, for the internally displaced, for host communities and for those who had returned home. Nonetheless, the challenges remained significant for the Government to face alone. For that reason, Mali relied upon the coordination of its actions with those of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian partners, to better assist the populations in need.

30. Mali was grateful to all of its humanitarian partners, notably the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs which supported national initiatives for the implementation of policies and programmes in favour of the affected populations. His Government also supported the humanitarian response plan for Mali and was concerned that current funding remained at just 11 per cent. Additional financial resources were needed to support efforts to assist those in need as a matter of urgency. The spirit of solidarity among humanitarian partners should continue in order to sustain assistance, not only to the Sahel, but also to the millions of people in need worldwide.

31. **Mr. Agyeman** (Observer for Ghana) said that the world was confronted by widespread and systemic humanitarian crises, a situation that reflected the failure of global norms and policies to prevent the risks that humanitarian assistance programmes were intended to mitigate. Therefore, a re-evaluation of global policies and development cooperation was necessary, as the growing humanitarian needs could not be matched by a sustainable humanitarian response. Furthermore, while the triple crisis of climate change, conflict and the

COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the humanitarian situations of millions of people worldwide, those in Africa had been particularly affected. Those crises had led to the disruption of entire economies, with millions of people experiencing severe economic hardship under conditions that threatened the stability of national life. The need for bold international action, both for response and resilience-building purposes, had never been more urgent.

32. A global plan should be formulated to ensure a timely, systematic and comprehensive response to the crisis currently faced. That plan should support the implementation of the African common position on food systems; take into account the \$1.5 billion African Emergency Food Production Facility; and increase support for existing initiatives. Building the resilience of vulnerable communities in West Africa and the Sahel against drought and desertification was also crucial, in order to mitigate and reverse the debilitating effects of climate change and conflict on food production. More support was also required to make the necessary food supplies available, given the current environment of food shortages and high prices. The international humanitarian community should become part of national and regional coordination mechanisms for programming and responding to humanitarian crises and should align its interventions with national and regional response plans. Moreover, full use should be made of indigenous mechanisms, particularly local, regional and national reserves. Major donors must also cooperate with a view to shifting funds out of separate silos so that food could be distributed and assistance provided to vulnerable communities, including for the reconstruction of their food and socioeconomic systems.

33. **Ms. Mudrenko** (Observer for Ukraine) said that her delegation aligned itself with the statement previously delivered by the European Union under the agenda item. In 2021, conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in an unprecedented rise in the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance, straining the humanitarian system and highlighting the need for effective coordination. The dire situation had been further aggravated in 2022 owing to the unjustified aggression by Russia against Ukraine, which had caused the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. The scale of the crisis was horrifying. In four months of war, thousands of civilians had been killed, including at least 324 children. Tens of thousands of people had also been injured, millions had been displaced and the damage to civilian infrastructure had been extensive. Furthermore, the real data contained much higher figures owing to the lack of access to areas under the control of Russian troops.

34. The impact of Russian aggression on the economy of Ukraine, already affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, had been devastating. During four months of war, the economy had shrunk by almost half, dramatically undermining national progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The crisis related to the invasion had affected all areas of life, including food, the environment and migration.

35. The United Nations system had played a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance to the population of Ukraine since the beginning of the aggression by Russia in 2014. Today, its role was critical, as over 15.5 million people needed humanitarian aid, particularly those without adequate access to vital services and supplies. Ukraine highly appreciated the efforts of the United Nations, the international community and all donors who were supporting the country and providing an emergency response. Her country was also grateful for the scaling up of United Nations activities and increasing funding to respond to the dramatically growing crisis, as well as to all those who were working tirelessly to provide assistance to those impacted by the devastation and destruction caused by the Russian invasion.

36. With regard to emergency and humanitarian responses, cash assistance had proven its effectiveness in helping affected populations; digital technologies provided groundbreaking solutions in responding to crises; and the provision of psychological and medical care and education through online applications was valuable. She stressed the continued importance of synergies of efforts between the United Nations system, the Government of Ukraine and civil society.

37. **Mr. Milambo** (Observer for Zambia) said that the depiction of the humanitarian situation in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2022/50) was alarming. Low-income countries had a much lower capacity to deal with the situation they faced within the context of social impacts including conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Situations involving refugees and internally displaced persons were being tackled within the context of constrained capacities and budgets. Governments in low-income countries were making efforts to address the humanitarian crisis, but much remained to be done.

38. At the global level, the United Nations and its partners must mobilize financing and solidarity to address diverse humanitarian needs and to enhance initiatives for disaster risk management. Building capacity and early-warning systems was necessary in order to anticipate humanitarian crises and to act early to prevent crises from occurring. The most vulnerable



countries must also build capacity at the country and local levels, tailored to the humanitarian needs of different people including women and girls, children, persons with disabilities, refugees and those fleeing political persecution. Countries in the developed world must also honour their pledges in connection with climate adaptation and mitigation.

39. **Ms. Droz** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the current humanitarian affairs segment was taking place in the context of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with an increasing number of people affected by war, displacement and poverty. The gap between existing needs and financial response was also increasing. In order to address the multiple challenges, a bold and united response was required from the international community. In the light of the multiple crises, the work of the United Nations humanitarian agencies was commendable and must be carried out in conformity with the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. The draft resolution under consideration at the current meeting (E/2022/L.11) should provide the normative framework for a rapid, effective, coordinated humanitarian response based on humanitarian principles.

40. Switzerland was committed to strengthening the coordination and responsibility of humanitarian actors during the current segment and would continue to advocate a culture of dialogue to identify consensus solutions. Humanitarian law was the universal legal framework for the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian assistance. All parties to armed conflicts must respect their obligations pursuant to international humanitarian law. Furthermore, it was important to ensure that no humanitarian needs were neglected, including those related to gender-based violence. In that regard, the courage displayed by humanitarian workers was commendable, particularly as they were often the targets of intolerable aggression. All perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law must be pursued, without exception.

41. Climate change and the increasing frequency of natural disasters exacerbated the vulnerability of populations already facing humanitarian crises and acted as a risk multiplier. The needs of forcibly displaced persons were also continuously increasing. Anticipatory action must be taken to mitigate the impact of shocks, reduce humanitarian needs and contribute to strengthening resilience in favour of effective and sustainable solutions. In addition, global food security was a source of major concern and conflicts remained the main cause of heightened food insecurity. The destruction of capacities for production, transformation and trade was alarming and had harmful effects on

availability and stable access to quality and affordable food for all. In order to mitigate the uncertainty of the market, States should refrain from imposing restrictions and prohibitions on exports. The current situation was the result of food systems that had not been reformed. Therefore, it was more necessary than ever to accelerate transformations of food systems towards greater sustainability, equality and resilience.

42. **Ms. Seong** (Republic of Korea) said that despite tireless global efforts and solidarity, the gap between humanitarian needs and assistance had yet to be closed, and efforts must be redoubled. With worsening attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers, the importance of protection could not be overemphasized and such atrocities must be strongly criticized. The most vulnerable groups, including women and girls, should receive special attention. Her delegation condemned any attempt to weaponize sexual and gender-based violence in the context of conflict and reiterated the importance of education for all children. Early, coordinated responses, made possible by funding flexible mechanisms, should be prioritized in order to save more lives and resources.

43. Her country had already decided to provide aid, through international organizations, to Afghanistan to help with recovery from the recent, deadly earthquake, and she reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the Republic of Korea to work with other donors and partners to achieve the collective goal of leaving no one behind.

44. **Ms. Ghukasyan** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that people on the move, persons with disabilities, older person, indigenous communities, women, children and those living in fragile settings or in countries with under-resourced health systems were not only disproportionately affected by diseases, disasters and displacement, but also the least likely to receive the medical, financial and social support that they needed. More than two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of lives were still at stake. As some countries were transitioning to a new normal, much of the world lacked high vaccination coverage, strong health systems and testing capacities. Equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and treatments needed to be made a reality by putting local communities at the centre of the response. That, in turn, would save lives and protect the world against the emergence of new, more dangerous variants and help to create resilient systems.

45. Since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federation and its network had worked with Governments to help to detect and slow the spread of the

disease, treat and support those most affected, and dispel myths and rumours about the virus, vaccines and the broader response.

46. With its long history of supporting the most vulnerable, her organization stood ready to continue working together with others to reach them. While dealing with COVID-19, many communities had also continued to face the impacts of disasters that were increasing both in frequency and intensity. The Federation estimated that 83 per cent of all disasters were caused by climate and weather-related events, affecting over 1.7 billion people. As had been learned from operational experience, the adverse impacts of such disasters that contributed to migration and displacement could, in some contexts, be mitigated through investment in effective disaster risk reduction, adaptation and resilience measures, early warning systems and anticipatory action. She hoped that the interest in, and commitment to, anticipatory approaches by many countries would be translated into action, especially at the local level and that more sustained and flexible funding would be available to scale it up.

47. **Mr. Elliott** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that because of conflict, climate change, economic challenges, including from COVID-19 restrictions, poverty, inequality and the current war in Ukraine, the world was facing unprecedented humanitarian needs and an unprecedented food crisis, and the gap between humanitarian needs and available financing continued to widen.

48. There was widespread consensus on the need to address humanitarian needs differently. Funding, from both new and traditional donors, must be scaled up, and much more dignified, impactful and cost-effective solutions that helped reduce need were also required. Funding must enable countries to address the root causes of humanitarian crises, increase the focus on prevention, build locally and nationally owned early warning capacities, and inform anticipatory actions. There must be a coherent response across silos, sectors and local and international actors. Nowhere was that more evident than in fighting acute food insecurity and famine.

49. Starvation and death were currently a very real threat for 750,000 people, nearly a ninefold increase since 2016. That was simply unacceptable. The 193 million people who were acutely food insecure in 2021 were primarily food producers and traders who lived in rural areas. Food assistance provided after the worst-case scenario was essential and saved lives, but unless equal priority was given to boosting local food

production and making agriculture more resilient, acute hunger would continue rising.

50. Around the world, approximately three quarters of the most food insecure relied on agriculture for their livelihoods. Emergency agriculture interventions were cost-effective and met immediate needs, laid the path to resilience and had knock-on positive effects for other sectors.

51. It was known that investing in agriculture and rural livelihoods was strategic, and 7 to 10 times more cost-effective than traditional assistance, but currently only 8 per cent of all food security funding in emergencies went to assist agricultural production. That had to change. Countries must seize the current moment of attention on global food insecurity to transform food systems, reduce the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development and peaceful and prosperous societies.

52. **Mr. Ahmad** (United Nations Environment Programme) said that transformative adaptation solutions were needed to address climate impacts and it was important to understand which solutions would be durable for the decades to come. The impact of climate change was not felt equally by all. Men were often forced to migrate away from their families in search of alternative livelihoods, resulting in new risks both for them and for the family members who stayed behind. Data and science-based analysis, while necessary to understanding the emerging challenges, were not sufficient to generate solutions. Strategies to address the conflicting interests and pressures that Member States faced were also needed in parallel.

53. Several practical suggestions should be considered. First, foresight tools, such as those used by the United Nations Environment Programme in Somalia, should be used more consistently to identify emerging risks relating to climate change and natural resources. Climate projections, hydrological modelling and remote sensing could be helpful for anticipating and monitoring change, and thus were relevant to the work of the United Nations in addressing humanitarian needs. The Programme also worked on data collection and analysis with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement to support access to clean energy for refugees and people displaced by conflict and environmental stresses.

54. Second, it was important to prepare for the long term. In Central America, the United Nations Environment Programme was strengthening the



technical capacities of municipalities and others, including through forest conservation, the establishment of agroforestry systems and improvements in water efficiency measures. Overall, the systematic integration of environmental considerations into crisis response and recovery increased the accountability and sustainability of human action.

*Draft resolution E/2022/L.11: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*

55. **The President** said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

56. *Draft resolution E/2022/L.11 was adopted.*

57. **Mr. Tittmann** (Observer for Hungary) said that his delegation wished to express its opposition to the last two preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution, which contained reference to the global compact on refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Hungary had not endorsed either of those compacts and did not participate in their implementation, and therefore dissociated itself from those paragraphs of the draft resolution.

### Closing of the segment

58. **Ms. Msuya Mpanju** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that as the Secretary-General had noted at the start of the week, the world was confronting a “mega-crisis” fuelled by conflict, climate change, the rising cost of living and a pandemic. The result was an alarming increase in hunger, poverty, displacement and inequality almost everywhere. For hundreds of thousands of people the threat of famine was all too real. And as the cost-of-living crisis started to become more severe, many countries were on the brink of economic devastation. The number of people who needed help had never been higher, yet, as had been discussed, the financial gap was enormous and, unless closed, would plunge millions more people into destitution. To respond to the rising tide of suffering, efforts must be redoubled to support a strong, flexible, well-resourced humanitarian system that was equipped to reach and protect people.

59. New solutions were needed to the many problems highlighted during the course of the discussions during the humanitarian segment, and those solutions must be locally owned. The humanitarian system must become less from the global North and more local. It was time to work with a new generation of local humanitarian agencies that could help shoulder the burden of the mega-crisis of the current era and analyse risks, create

plans and have access to pre-arranged financing to put those plans into action. In 2021, more than a quarter of the country-based pooled funds of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had gone directly to local and national non-governmental organizations. But more needed to be done to empower local organizations to lead.

60. All of the various solutions highlighted during the course of the discussions had a real power to transform the ability of the humanitarian sector to respond to the rising levels of suffering. But those solutions would fall short of their potential without three vital ingredients. The first ingredient was perhaps the most important. To solve a problem one must understand it. Thus, people must be understood in all their diversity in order to truly serve them and meet their needs. Without such an essential understanding the response would never be enough. It must be a duty to listen and respond accordingly; that was what it meant to demonstrate solidarity and respect.

61. Second, it was clear that countries must work together to address the root causes of the contemporary interconnected crises, as humanitarian assistance could only go so far. Leaders needed to redouble their efforts at peacebuilding and conflict resolution and invest in strengthening basic services, including national health-care systems, and expanding social safety nets.

62. The last key ingredient, which was the one that would ensure success, was collaboration. Collaboration and multilateralism would be crucial for countries to transform at the speed and scale necessary.

63. Interconnected crises required an interconnected response. Planetary emergencies required planetary politics. Cooperation among people and countries demonstrated what was possible, and how powerful humans could be when acting together. People in their hour of greatest need wanted firstly to survive and secondly to find a way out of crisis. The distinction between saving lives and building resilience was to be determined by institutions and persons in decision-making positions.

64. Humanitarian, development and peacemaking communities must work together and not let those institutional distinctions get in the way. The time had come to embrace difference, to address the issues that constrained collaboration and to find common ground. The discussions over the previous few days had revealed a central truth: it was clear what was needed to build a better humanitarian system, one that could rise to the enormity of the problems of today and those of tomorrow. She was confident that the international community could rise to that challenge.

65. **The President** said that the discussions on strengthening humanitarian assistance, focusing on actions and lessons to be learned from recovery from the pandemic, conflict and compliance with international humanitarian law, and the climate crisis, had been highly relevant and timely. The current challenges were creating a protection crisis, with women and children often being affected the most. That included the shadow pandemic of gender-based violence; the lack of access to health care, education and learning spaces; and horrendous attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, water systems and agricultural production, in multiple parts of the world.

66. It had been made clear in the panel discussions that people must be at the centre of all humanitarian preparedness and response efforts, and particularly women and children, who were disproportionately affected in the humanitarian crisis and faced even greater protection risks such as food insecurity and displacement, and climate change. That was taking an increasingly heavy toll on their communities and their survival.

67. The international community must ensure equitable, affordable and universal access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries and all people. Two years into the pandemic, it was unacceptable that many of the poorest countries in the world were still battling the COVID-19 virus unvaccinated, while facing hunger and poverty. Greater cooperation and solidarity from the international community were needed so that vaccines and vaccination could be declared a global public good.

68. It was necessary to strengthen and invest in national health-care systems to manage and prevent the next pandemic, but also to be better equipped to address the secondary health impacts of disease outbreaks, especially on women and children. Strengthening of, and investment in, social protection systems was also needed to respond to shocks, build resilience and protect the most vulnerable people in societies, including women, children, indigenous peoples, older persons and persons with disabilities. The empowerment of women and girls would address gender inequality and promote the meaningful participation of women in humanitarian action, planning and decision-making. It was universally recognized that the representation of women led to better humanitarian responses and outcomes. Protection response must be strengthened and better funded, including to prevent and respond to gender-based and sexual violence.

69. Also needed was urgent action to invest in education and recovery in countries affected by

humanitarian crises and to reimagine education in those contexts, especially for vulnerable girls and boys. There was a learning crisis, with millions of children who needed support to regain lost education for their present and future. It was necessary to reach and retain all children in school, assess learning levels, prioritize the teaching of the fundamentals, increase remedial learning and progress beyond what was lost, and build psychosocial health and well-being so that all children would be ready to learn.

70. There was a need to prioritize mental health and psychosocial support during humanitarian crises. Attention to mental health care should be included as part of the response to address needs and as a core component of the obligations of aid organizations to their staff.

71. It was necessary to urgently and ambitiously intensify actions to respond to the climate crisis. There was a moral imperative to support the most vulnerable people, communities and countries to adapt and become more resilient. Those who would have to face loss and damage caused by the climate crisis would have an even greater need for international solidarity and responsibility. The financial commitments of developed countries must be met urgently, including \$100 billion a year in climate finance to developing countries on an equitable basis.

72. Humanitarian workers could provide humanitarian assistance to support the countries, communities and people most affected by climate-related disasters, but may be the least able to respond to the magnitude and repeated climate shocks if their resources were not also increased.

73. It was also necessary to expand anticipatory approaches and invest more in early warning to prevent and mitigate disasters and help communities, societies and economies adapt as the climate crisis deepened. In the face of escalating food insecurity and looming famine, early financing would help preposition critical inputs, such as creating seed stocks or strengthening medical supply chains. The time had come to act on data by shifting to anticipatory approaches at the scale required to prevent suffering and minimize the loss of life.

74. It was necessary to boost local food production and invest in agriculture in vulnerable countries to build resilience to shocks. Responding to the growing risk of acute food insecurity and famine required a multisectoral approach that included food security, health, nutrition, clean water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, and safe and unhindered access for

humanitarian workers. Otherwise, acute hunger would continue to grow and deepen.

75. Local actors, especially women-led organizations, who were on the front lines of the response and critical to humanitarian efforts, must be strengthened and empowered. Supporting locally led organizations to act early would enable a more sustainable response and resilient communities. The COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated the importance of meaningful partnerships with local actors and of supporting and strengthening community preparedness and engagement programmes that were critical to building and implementing humanitarian responses that met the needs of affected communities.

76. Meaningful engagement must be ensured and affected people and communities must be empowered, not only by providing them with timely and actionable information, but also by responding more effectively to their specific needs and continuously adapting the response to ensure greater collective accountability to affected people. Community feedback systems must be systematically instituted to enable affected people to provide their views on humanitarian action and report any abuse that might occur, including sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud, corruption, racism and all forms of discrimination.

77. Compliance with international humanitarian law was also imperative for all parties to all armed conflicts. Doing so guaranteed the protection of civilians and the infrastructure they relied on, as well as the effective delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in need. Conflict remained the main driver of hunger and humanitarian need.

78. Humanitarian exemptions from counter-terrorism and sanctions must be provided. Such exemptions should be the norm, rather than being negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Accountability must be ensured for serious violations of international humanitarian law, including targeted attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel. Humanitarian access must be ensured and facilitated, and capacities and efforts must be strengthened for humanitarian access and negotiations so that humanitarian workers could reach those most in need.

79. The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence were essential to the provision of humanitarian aid. Countries must work together creatively and purposefully across the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding communities to find structural solutions and build resilience.

80. It was also urgently necessary to close the funding gap to meet humanitarian needs, especially through support to the Central Emergency Response Fund and humanitarian, country-based pooled funds which served to save lives, respond early to emerging and ongoing crises, and support underfunded crises.

81. Humanitarian action required a humanitarian perspective and humanitarian sentiment. True justice, solidarity, reciprocity and cooperation were needed, and efforts should be united and humanitarian diplomacy strengthened with a strong, resilient and more inclusive multilateralism capable of responding to the growing humanitarian challenges faced by the peoples of the world.

*The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.*