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President: Ms. Chan Valverde (Vice-President) ....(Costa Rica)

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In the absence of Mr. Rae (Canada), Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/80/75-E/2025/55)

High-level panel discussion: "Mobilizing and adapting humanitarian financing for an effective and efficient response"

1. **The President** said that, with 300 million people in need and critical services at risk of shutting down, effective and efficient financing mechanisms were essential for saving lives and protecting vulnerable populations. At a time of constrained budgets, solidarity, innovation and strategic investment were needed to ensure that no one was left behind. The panel discussion would highlight the innovative tools that the humanitarian community could use to maximize impact and enable rapid response. The panellists would consider how to expand the partnership base by engaging Member States beyond traditional donors, mobilizing private-sector resources and leveraging international financial institutions, and would explore how to reimagine humanitarian financing, considering the need for mechanisms to generate additional financing and system improvements.

2. **Ms. Daniels** (Deputy Director General for Operations, International Organization for Migration (IOM)), panellist, said that, despite grappling with unprecedented levels of displacement, climate shock and geopolitical instability, IOM had remained at the forefront of humanitarian response, delivering life-saving assistance, fostering resilience and adaptation, strengthening institutional capacity and enabling solutions for millions of people on the move. In 2024, it had reached over 26 million people in 100 countries. Nevertheless, IOM anticipated a significant decline in the number of people it was able to support, as its 2025 budget had been cut by about 40 per cent. The repercussions were already evident: 8.2 million people had been immediately impacted by delayed or disrupted assistance, and many communities were being left behind. For example, 1 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh were facing the loss of shelter, water, health and protection services; over 1.3 million victims of the conflict in Colombia were without access to justice or support for reintegration; and 12 million women and girls no longer had access to services to prevent or respond to gender-based violence. The reduction in funding had not only undermined the ability of IOM to plan and respond early, but had forced it to make impossible choices. Decisions to suspend or close essential operations had had a direct impact on the safety and well-being of millions of displaced people. The Organization's core structures, headquarters functions and activities in areas such as policy formulation, standard setting and quality control, had also been affected, weakening global coordination and reducing the ability to deliver. There had also been an impact on the services that IOM provided to the wider humanitarian community, such as the Displacement Tracking Matrix that provided data on almost 90 million individuals; the humanitarian hubs that facilitated access to remote and high-risk areas; and the common pipelines for joint procurement.

3. Adequate, predictable funding at scale would make a huge difference. It would allow IOM to better prepare its responses and to adopt an aggressive institutional approach to programme implementation in line with the humanitarian-peace-development nexus, instead of pursuing ad hoc projects in which IOM brought together funding from various donors. It would also ensure the durability of the transition from internationally led responses to locally led, government-owned development approaches. With predictable funding, IOM would be able to aggressively pursue localization, particularly in relation to its work with women-led organizations, the development of national data systems on internally displaced persons and support for the capacity development of Governments.

4. In the current context of fragmentation and funding cuts, humanitarian partners were scrambling to support those most in need. She was particularly concerned that 200 million people who continued to be in need had not been included under the hyperprioritized approach, which was aimed at saving as many lives as possible with the resources available. She hoped that Member States would take action to enable the humanitarian community to

rise to the challenge, so that affected persons could live lives of safety and dignity, now and in the future.

5. **Ms. Doughten** (Director, Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)), panellist, said that, in the context of a dire funding crisis, every decision taken by the humanitarian community should be guided by the shared goal of delivering the most effective and efficient response. The consequences of the funding crisis were measured in human suffering and could be seen on the news every day. Critical humanitarian services, including healthcare, food security and protection for vulnerable populations, were being withdrawn, increasing the risk of preventable deaths and malnutrition, especially in fragile and conflict areas. Humanitarian actors were not merely stretched thin, but were being forced to decide who received life-saving assistance and who did not.

6. It was time to pause and reflect on the toll of the funding cuts and the heartbreaking choices that humanitarians faced. In May 2025, almost 300 million people worldwide had been in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection. In the first months of the year, conflict and violence had intensified in multiple countries, deepening needs and driving many people to the brink. Since March 2025, humanitarians had been forced to hyperprioritize response efforts; accordingly, the United Nations and its partners had identified 114 million people with life-threatening needs who were targeted for the most urgent assistance and protection. In doing so, it had chosen between those who faced famine conditions and were starving, and those who were very hungry and suffering from acute malnutrition. The 114 million people who had been hyperprioritized accounted for only 39 per cent of people in need of humanitarian assistance globally, and just 64 per cent of those who had been targeted previously in the Global Humanitarian Overview and humanitarian needs and response plans.

7. The consequences of funding cuts were not abstract, but devastatingly real. Humanitarian organizations across the globe had been affected: many had been forced to lay off thousands of staff, while some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had shut down. The most important consequence, however, remained the deadly impact on people in need of support. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, underfunding combined with a surge in violence meant that 250,000 children would miss out on activities aimed at preventing gender-based violence – in a country where it had been estimated that, at the height of the conflict, a child had been raped every 30 minutes.

8. In Sudan, nearly two thirds of the population, including 16 million children, were in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Acute food insecurity had reached historic levels, with famine conditions confirmed in various parts of the country. In Yemen, drastic funding cuts were forcing aid agencies to scale back critical programming, leaving millions of people without life-saving support, while vital services for malnourished children and survivors of violence had been shut down. In Afghanistan, where half of the population depended on humanitarian assistance to survive, community resource centres had been closed, leaving tens of thousands of people without food, shelter or legal aid.

9. What had occurred was not a failure of the humanitarian system, but a failure of investment. The humanitarian financing system had, in fact, been delivering results. Over decades, a global humanitarian response system had been developed that, although imperfect, was fast, principled and efficient and that provided a lifeline to hundreds of millions of people in their hour of need. Efforts were being accelerated to make the system work better for the people it served. With the humanitarian reset as a guide, the international community should aim to deliver coordinated, principled humanitarian action with protection at its core, supported by a critical mass of pooled funding, under the strategic leadership of humanitarian coordinators.

10. A wide range of global and country-based funds ensured that every dollar entrusted to humanitarians would support the hyperprioritized and coordinated response. The Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds were two critical tools that could be used to maximize reach, scale and speed. Pooled funding was important for empowering leadership at the country level, supporting country-led and inclusive planning, driving innovation, prioritizing the most vulnerable communities and strengthening locally led

humanitarian efforts. The Central Emergency Response Fund was known for its speed and scale, both in kick-starting emergency responses and championing neglected crises. As a large financier of anticipatory action, it relied on data and predictive analytics while working with national and international partners. Anticipatory action, in which funds were disbursed within minutes of a trigger being reached, allowed actors to mitigate the most severe impacts of crises, saving lives, livelihoods and money.

11. Another mechanism of note was the Central Emergency Response Fund's climate action account, launched in 2023 at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which channelled climate-related resources and financing to humanitarian response. Regional country-based pooled funds brought together Governments, local responders and international agencies, preventing duplication and maximizing impact. In 2024, nearly half of country-based pooled funding had gone to local and national organizations. Many other relevant tools supported localized response, including the Disaster Response Emergency Fund of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Start Network. International actors should therefore focus on pooled funds and other ways of channelling funding to the country level and to local and national partners as quickly and effectively as possible.

12. Having been forced to hyperprioritize their efforts, humanitarians were concerned that a reduction in development funding could exacerbate the situation. Development funding addressed the underlying drivers of poverty and vulnerability, and the impact of funding cuts would be particularly pronounced in fragile settings where people faced a higher risk of being left behind. Donors were therefore encouraged to maintain their development activities and to focus on sustaining essential services and social protection in fragile contexts.

13. **Mr. Agbor** (UNICEF Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), panellist, said that the humanitarian system was currently facing a brutal paradox: needs were rising but resources were falling. In 2024, the humanitarian sector had sought $44 billion to assist 186 million vulnerable people. However, amid persistent massive shortfalls, it had been forced to prioritize the most desperate among the desperate, leaving millions behind. The situation was not sustainable.

14. From a field perspective, four shifts must be made to reimagine humanitarian financing in the current global context. Firstly, it was necessary to move from reactive aid to anticipatory, resilience-based investment. Humanitarian financing had become too short-term, too fragmented and increasingly misaligned with the realities of protracted, complex crises. Conflict, climate shocks, displacement and economic fragility were no longer isolated events; they were overlapping, compounding pressures. Finance should take account of such complexity. One good practice had been the recent activation of the anticipatory action framework for cholera in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with resources allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund helping to prevent a large-scale epidemic and avoiding heavier costs at a later date. An anticipatory, resilience-based approach also meant operationalizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in budgets, while investing in social protection, community-based health, early warning and durable water and education systems, even in conflict settings. In Tanganyika Province, cooperation between national authorities, local communities and United Nations agencies had helped to break cycles of intercommunity violence. Peace had taken root and children were returning to school. Such efforts were nearly impossible under annual funding cycles.

15. Secondly, a shift in ownership was needed. Too much humanitarian funding flowed around, rather than through, national systems and local actors, which in turn weakened long-term resilience and limited the effectiveness of response. More must be done to mobilize domestic resources and strengthen local governance – not because countries could carry the burden alone, but because sustainable solutions must be locally anchored.

16. Thirdly, it was necessary to widen the humanitarian tent, bringing in new actors, regional powers, international financial institutions, diaspora groups and, above all, the private sector, as the current model relied too heavily on the narrow base of traditional donors. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had partnered with the Mastercard Foundation to curb an mpox outbreak and invest in community health systems. The private sector should not be seen merely as a donor,

but as a co-creator of solutions. With the right platforms, business incentives could be aligned with humanitarian outcomes.

17. Fourthly, there was a need for a moral and ethical pivot and a new humanitarian compact, grounded not only in needs assessments, response plans and grants, but in shared values, responsibility and vision. Affected people should be seen not as passive recipients, but as agents of change, in a move away from donor-recipient dynamics and towards partnerships for collective humanity. Humanitarian action could not succeed without peace, and peace could not endure without addressing the root causes of conflict. That meant confronting local tensions over land, resources and traditional authority, while also addressing transnational drivers such as the unregulated exploitation of natural wealth and the diversion of financial flows.

18. The ongoing reform efforts offered an opportunity to realize the vision of a coherent, multilevel response, rooted in national ownership, reinforced by regional solidarity and backed by global resolve. UNICEF stood firmly behind the UN80 Initiative and the humanitarian reset as vital steps towards a more agile, effective and people-centred humanitarian system. As co-lead of the UN80 development and humanitarian clusters, UNICEF was advancing practical reforms to enhance coordination, scale-up shared services and embed child rights at every level. The humanitarian reset should deepen partnerships with Governments, regional bodies and development actors to ensure that crisis responses were inclusive, locally owned and truly sustainable. The time for incremental change was over. Humanitarian financing should be reimagined not as a cost but as an investment in global stability. Humanitarians should strive to broaden the base, adapt the model and renew the values that underpinned their work, acting with urgency and courage for the world’s most vulnerable people.

19. **Mr. Konyndyk** (President, Refugees International), panellist, said that the decades-old global political consensus on the importance of investment in humanitarian aid appeared to be collapsing at a time when global humanitarian need was at historically high levels. It was a profound indictment of the state of humankind that it could not muster the equivalent of 1 per cent of the funding allocated to defence budgets globally to spend on the humanitarian sector, which had no choice but to do less with less funding. How it chose to do that was a matter of life or death for the people it served. Localization and locally led financing must be expedited. To do that, it was necessary to fundamentally review and reconfigure the existing humanitarian financial architecture, particularly the role of pooled funding and that of the traditional United Nations agencies as pass-through intermediaries for donor funding. To achieve those aims would require a greater level of focus and political will among Member States and donor institutions.

20. The first half of 2025 had been very difficult for the humanitarian sector, which had been forced to make devastating cuts to life-saving response operations. It was not enough to prioritize areas to fund in the immediate term with a view to saving as many lives as possible, as the sector had done so far: it was now necessary to make difficult decisions as to how to optimize the system without the restrictions imposed by existing financial models. For the foreseeable future, the sector would receive between half and two thirds of the funding that it had traditionally been given, as many donors were reducing their contributions. Commitments to localization, which had been made over the past 25 years, including under the Grand Bargain, must now be honoured. Since the Grand Bargain, the share of humanitarian financing that was provided to local and national actors had barely increased, and in some cases had fallen. While the ethical and practical arguments for addressing that problem were sound, shifting to local leadership would in some cases require large international institutions to reduce their role and size in a well-managed process, which was currently especially difficult for them to do.

21. It was necessary to re-examine the practice of donors, including the share of funding that had been received by major humanitarian institutions and the division of labour between them, which had changed very little in the previous 20 years, with a view to promoting the use of pooled funds. There was currently a large number of both official and unofficial pooled funds affiliated with many NGOs and large multilateral agencies that needed to be streamlined. In doing so, it was important to ensure, for example, that United Nations agencies remained capable of upholding mandates to perform roles such as managing global

logistics and supply chains that only they were well placed to do. At the same time, there was strong evidence that pooled funding mechanisms such as country-based pooled funds were a better model than passing funding through institutions to deliver it on the front line. More ambitious models, such as the Gavi Alliance and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which there was currently no equivalent in the humanitarian system, had proved to be highly efficient for pooling money at a global level and allocating it effectively at a country level. The problem of obtaining access to humanitarian funding that could truly be used for multiple purposes, which represented the single most effective form of intervention, was in part political. It was commendable that a number of traditional humanitarian actors had declared themselves willing to change ingrained habits and demonstrate the political will necessary for change. Donor States needed to commit to providing humanitarian funding in a different way, cultivating champion States who were willing to invest time, energy and political commitment in overcoming risk appetite issues that had hindered localization, and finding the political will to reverse some of the cuts to funding imposed. Member States must not allow current political divisions to prevent them from working together to make the critically urgent reforms needed to ensure the effectiveness and impact of the humanitarian system.

22. **Ms. Quirke** (Global Partnerships Lead, Humanitarian and Development, Visa Government Solutions), panellist, said that, while it was critical to discuss new sources of financing, it was even more important to question how existing financing could be more effectively used. Although it was often assumed that programmatic interventions should be reimagined, some of the most significant changes that could be made related to how funding flowed. The way in which end recipients received funding could determine its programmatic impact. Funding often moved a number of times on the route from donor to recipient, particularly when multiple agencies were involved. How it did so affected the speed, cost and visibility of donations. Once funding arrived at its destination, it was often paid out in cash and the visibility of the funding was lost. Visa Inc. was seeking better alternatives, such as payment rails that could disburse funding from Geneva directly into the mobile wallet or onto the card of an end recipient, taking the local context into account.

23. Since before the current funding crisis, United Nations entities such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had begun adapting humanitarian financing with such alternatives in mind. The United Nations Financial Gateway, which was powered by the Digital Hub of Treasury Solutions led by UNHCR, had been set up with the aim of reimagining aid to do more with existing funding by using technological innovation to enhance the efficacy of how it flowed, including the channels used. UNHCR and the World Food Programme were also using blockchain technology to increase the speed of transfers, which was key in humanitarian crises. Such transfers were also more financially inclusive of end recipients and cost less; millions of dollars had already been saved using new technologies. It was the vision of the United Nations Financial Gateway to provide such solutions at scale, thereby enabling far greater cost reduction, and to share such solutions across United Nations agencies and partner organizations. Using shared systems was critical to doing more with less; it was not an option to do less, given the unchanged level of need.

24. While financial instruments like debt swaps and social impact bonds were currently being used effectively by organizations, experience had shown that they were costly and took time and specialist expertise to design and implement. In the absence of easy solutions, it was as important to work with what was currently available as it was with future technologies, applying a profound understanding of the challenges involved to consideration of which existing solutions could drive impact at scale. As humanitarian response should be systems-wide and society-wide, solutions needed to be shared across humanitarian actors, the private sector and Governments and their citizens. The expertise of different actors, such as Governments’ knowledge of taxation systems, could be more impactful than funding.

25. It was crucial that any funding raised flowed to and was received by recipients in a way that met their needs and supported their aspirations, and there was an urgent need to reimagine financing from their perspective. It was necessary to consider both tactical questions of how to deliver aid and strategic questions, such as how the assistance supported the goals of the Government and whether it helped recipients to integrate financially. Visa

Inc. was working on such problems with Governments across Africa and Asia and with humanitarian organizations, and exciting progress was being made in adapting humanitarian financing for a more sustainable future.

26. **Ms. Veloza** (Director, Genfami), panellist, said that changes in the prioritization of humanitarian issues had resulted in the shifting of focus away from certain issues that were considered to be secondary to others, but were often matters of life or death, such as combating violence against children and women. Although the number of emergency situations recorded was increasing, serious issues with the prioritization of assistance and the organization of funding processes remained to be addressed. It was essential to link efforts to save lives with processes that enabled communities to become agents of change rather than simply beneficiaries of aid. In humanitarian crises, children and women were often the most in need, as they often also had to deal with violence that had an impact on their social relationships and could slow their recovery. It was important to consider how women-led organizations, might function under alternative arrangements that better served their members on the front line, and how coalitions of such organizations such as the Call to Action Field Implementation Network might benefit from such alternatives. It was also important to consider developing protection methods with a focus not only on urgent situations but also on broader national contexts, particularly in Colombia, where integrated approaches were needed to address the challenges posed by an ongoing conflict, mixed migration flows and a high level of inequality.

27. Prevention should be recognized as a non-negotiable pillar of any humanitarian action, with a view to ensuring people’s dignity, autonomy and capacity for self-determination by providing them with the appropriate tools. The risks of intersectional issues should be identified at an early stage to ensure that actors on the ground had an integrated understanding of the risks. In addition, financing should be aligned with the real make-up of the affected populations with a view to ensuring it assisted all the people it was intended to benefit, and crisis leadership by women and girls should be strengthened to guarantee greater security, build capacities that would endure in situations of reduced funding and bring about structural change in societies dominated by male chauvinism. Women-led organizations should be financed and protected as key stakeholders that participated in decision-making on an equal footing with other actors. To bring about real change, it was necessary for women and children to be placed at the centre of humanitarian financing efforts, including by ensuring that women-led organizations could benefit from funding mechanisms directly in an ethical and sustained manner, without excessive administrative burdens. It was important to explore innovative funding mechanisms, by forging a transformative alliance with the private sector, with a view to developing a gender justice system and enabling organizations to grow in size through the use of ethical funds, and to improve coordination and localization with greater input from women’s organizations, particularly at the international level.

28. **Mr. MacDougall** (Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office at Geneva), discussant, said that it was important to acknowledge that members of international organizations and NGOs worked on the front lines providing support at great sacrifice, including of their own lives. Humanitarian response was, in almost all cases, a response to failures of governance, conflict prevention or other systems whose consequences often took decades to address. It was the responsibility of Member States and development actors to do a better job of preventing crisis situations from occurring and persisting.

29. It had long been clear that the status quo with respect to funding in the humanitarian sector was not sustainable, and now, given the reduction in contributions from multiple donors, the sector no longer had a choice but to innovate and adapt, collectively. Canada viewed the humanitarian reset as an important opportunity to reaffirm the core purpose of the humanitarian system, which was to protect and assist those most at risk during acute emergencies. The efficient collection and sharing of data was required by the system and donors to make sound needs assessments and decisions based on them. While Canada strongly supported the use of pooled funds, which were an important tool for quickly addressing gaps in funding and could support flexible, needs-based responses, it was important, when discussing fixed numerical targets for such funds under the United Nations system, not to inadvertently limit operational flexibility in contexts that required urgent responses. More must be done to strengthen the capacities and decision-making ability of

local responders and reduce barriers for marginalized groups, including by empowering women-led organizations. The current funding situation would likely worsen before it improved. It was necessary to look beyond the humanitarian system to development actors, particularly international financial institutions, which had a critical role to play in supporting stability and addressing drivers of humanitarian crises in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Humanitarian actors had a role to play in supporting access for international financial institutions and helping them to manage risks, and such institutions' engagement must align with their relative strengths rather than duplicating any activities of humanitarian partners. Canada encouraged the forging of new partnerships with the private sector, especially with response enablers such as transportation and logistics, while urging that any new models developed must remain consistent with humanitarian principles.

30. **Ms. Al-Hashami** (Observer for Iraq) said that, although the gap between needs and resources continued to grow, it remained important to assist every person possible. Iraq had donated $25 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), received 17,000 Lebanese refugees without identity documents during the war in Lebanon and recently contributed $40 million towards the provision of aid in Gaza and Lebanon. Humanitarian action must be a top priority for all parties, and no double standards must be applied. Borders must be opened to asylum-seekers who were fleeing death. If doing so was made a political priority, the burden would be shared equally among the international community and it would be possible to respond adequately to asylum-seekers' needs.

31. **Mr. Quirino** (Brazil) said that Brazil acknowledged the strain placed on humanitarian organizations by the resource shortfall, which had taken all parties by surprise, and appreciated the efforts of such organizations to respond effectively and preserve as much operational capacity as possible. The response to the shortfall must not be defined solely by technical considerations or by consultations limited to a small group of countries; meaningful engagement with States should be sought out, particularly regarding the prioritization of activities. Global stability and the fate of thousands of people hinged on such decisions. Humanitarian organizations needed to find a way to coordinate activities with the Governments concerned. Although developing countries continued to host nearly 90 per cent of all displaced persons, they were being called upon to assume yet further responsibilities. Brazil encouraged all parties to engage in international cooperation with a view to achieving more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing as envisaged by the Global Compact on Refugees. The multilateral peace and security architecture had proved to be flawed in that the humanitarian financing model was exposed to risks of underfunding and political pressure. A renewed humanitarian system should be neutral and truly universal to ensure that aid reached those in need unconditionally. To create such a system, it would be necessary to broaden the donor base, diversify funding sources and ensure that financial flows were more flexible and predictable, but also for the entire international community to make a renewed commitment to its success. Donors must realize that defunding humanitarian agencies could result in worldwide instability. Localization and resource rationalization could not be achieved simply by adding to the obligations of local governments and civil society organizations, which could not bear such a burden without institutional capacity-building and the financial resources necessary to fulfil essential tasks.

32. **Mr. Garratt** (United Kingdom) said that there was a collective responsibility to take a more coherent and effective approach to humanitarian action in terms of funding, to strengthen meaningful partnerships and to commit sustained investment in national capacities. It was necessary to dovetail the cuts that agencies, civil society and other local actors had already been obliged to make with a collaborative strategic decision-making process, which the United Kingdom would continue to advocate for through the UN80 Initiative and the humanitarian reset. Member States could play a role in ongoing efforts to alleviate suffering by ensuring that United Nations agencies retained the capacity to fulfil their mandates to carry out tasks that no other entity could perform. Collaborative strategic decisions must be made about areas in which cuts should be made. The United Kingdom was using its position on the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank Group to advocate its critical role not as a humanitarian actor, but in bringing jobs and human capital development to the places that needed them most. His Government also supported an ambitious increase in humanitarian assistance through initiatives such as pooled funds and

cash and mutual aid consortiums. The United Kingdom was the largest cumulative contributor to both the Central Emergency Response Fund and to country-based pooled funds managed by OCHA.

33. **Ms. Cajipe** (Observer for the Philippines) said that the Philippines, which was situated at the front line of natural hazards and was also deeply aware of human-induced hazards, had learned that humanitarian financing must not only respond to crises, but also anticipate emergencies, empower people, and be delivered with integrity and impact. The Philippines was integrating humanitarian financing into its social protection system, with programmes providing conditional cash transfers and assistance to individuals in crisis situations that supported chronically vulnerable populations and could be rapidly scaled up during crises. It was also scaling up use of emergency cash transfers as a principled, efficient and dignified way to deliver aid in a part of the world where cash assistance empowered families to meet urgent needs and stimulated local economies. Delivery systems needed to be fast, flexible, and grounded in the humanitarian principles of strengthening resilience and response. In addition, her Government was leveraging digital financial platforms to deliver aid securely, transparently, and at scale, while simultaneously working to close the digital divide with a view to ensuring that such innovations remained inclusive and equitable.

34. While the Philippines strongly supported pooled financing models like the Central Emergency Response Fund, such models must become more accessible to middle-income and disaster-prone countries, and more connected to local actors. Her Government contributed what it could to humanitarian financing and encouraged similarly situated countries to do the same. The humanitarian system must be made fit for purpose by reducing inefficiencies, avoiding institutional bloat and ensuring funds were not diverted to redundant systems but reached the people who need them. The Philippines stood ready to work with all partners to rebuild a humanitarian system that was anticipatory, inclusive, lean and principled.

35. **Ms. Valdés Rank de Sperisen** (Observer for Guatemala) said that the current meeting served as an essential platform for improving coordination within the United Nations humanitarian assistance system and renewing the relevance of humanitarian affairs in the work of the United Nations. A financial crisis coupled with social conflicts had unleashed an inflationary food crisis that was affecting the well-being of and peaceful relations between populations. The humanitarian sector faced a profoundly precarious financial situation, with a deficit that was resulting in deaths. Multilateralism must be strengthened as a tool for cooperation and harmonization. The national humanitarian response plan formulated in Guatemala in cooperation with national institutions and the United Nations system complemented existing governmental action to address humanitarian emergencies. However, only 11.6 per cent of the funds necessary for full realization of the plan had been secured thus far. Direct financial contributions to accredited aid agencies were one of the most effective ways of responding to situations of emergency. It was worrying that the percentage of resources assigned to assistance had dropped despite the increased vulnerability of Guatemala to the humanitarian emergencies. Her delegation urged the international community to step up its efforts to mobilize resources.

36. **Mr. Venté** (Observer for Children and Youth International), speaking on behalf of the major group for children and youth, said that the panel discussion had included important reflections on adapting humanitarian financing to ensure efficient and effective responses, but the role of young people as key stakeholders in humanitarian response ecosystems had been overlooked. Young people were not only among those most affected by crises that were not of their making, including armed conflicts, forced displacement, climate emergencies and economic instability, but were also key drivers of front-line response and recovery efforts. Despite having limited institutional support, young people stepped in where systems failed to meet expectations, acting as community mobilizers, front-line humanitarian workers and local innovators who developed context-specific solutions, navigated uncertainty and addressed gaps in services. Nevertheless, their contributions continued to be systematically undervalued and underfunded.

37. Based on input from young people from around the world and a recent position paper, the major group for children and youth wished to put forward two recommendations. First, investment should be made in an inclusive system in which affected communities were seen

as leaders and co-organizers of response and recovery efforts, and integrated and sustained services should be prioritized from early warning systems to education and social protection. Secondly, community-led innovations should be operationalized. Although those close to crises, especially young people, were already responding to them through digital tools, informal networks and community-led recovery efforts, their contributions remained underrepresented. To close those gaps, donors and agencies must adopt accessible and flexible funding mechanisms that enabled youth-led and community-based actors to contribute as equal partners and coordinate humanitarian action. In that context, the major group welcomed initiatives to launch broader financial commitments that prioritized the principle of humanity and impartiality. The humanitarian system could not transform without young people as decision-makers, fund recipients and co-shapers of the future.

38. **Ms. Büsch** (Switzerland) said that the funding gap was not simply a matter of money, but a lethal failure of solidarity. When levels of need soared and the level of available support remained low, services collapsed and trust faded. Switzerland believed that the current crisis must serve as a decisive wake-up call. Both the amount of funding and the manner in which it was provided mattered. Two strategic priorities were pooled funding and good-quality direct financing for local actors. Pooled funds were one of the most effective tools currently available. Mechanisms like the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds delivered high-impact results, were cost-efficient, rapidly deployable and enabled strategic coordination in the field, and were a powerful enabler of local response, supporting those who were first to act and last to leave. While Switzerland strongly supported the call of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to scale up funding to OCHA-managed pooled funds and was committed to doing its part, it was necessary to go further. Local actors must have direct access to funds, and United Nations pooled funds must be seen as part of an inclusive and diverse pooled funding landscape, in which they worked together with and complemented locally led funds, regional mechanisms and thematic pooled funds to serve communities in crisis. It was also necessary to provide flexible, predictable resources that aligned with realities on the ground. When such funding was provided to intermediaries, it must be passed on in the same spirit to local actors. Such an approach reflected the mutual commitment made under the Grand Bargain, and Switzerland would continue to hold its partners accountable to that standard. While fragmented, earmarked contributions might provide visibility, they ultimately undermined collective impact. Switzerland firmly advocated for unearmarked support and multi-year funding and called on others to follow its example.

39. **Ms. Carlson** (Dominican Republic) said that the current humanitarian situation was the result not only of a financial collapse, but also of an ethical one. The crises being faced were increasingly complex, yet humanitarian financing continued to be fragmented and to fail to meet the level of need. An approach was needed under which prevention was prioritized, national systems were bolstered and action was properly coordinated. The Dominican Republic supported precautionary measures and had adopted such measures, which had demonstrated its value in saving lives and reducing costs. A change in mindset was needed; communities and local actors must be seen as partners rather than just as beneficiaries. The reform of the humanitarian system was a vital opportunity to progress towards a more coherent, sustainable, person-centred system. It had been clearly demonstrated that the humanitarian system could have a positive impact on local organizations. Such an approach must be amplified with the engagement not only of traditional donors, but also of the private sector, international financial institutions and regional actors. It was time to redouble efforts, innovate and act with the urgency that the situation demanded. She wondered what role, if any, could be played by remittances in such efforts. It was opportune to consider innovative solutions for making cash available at a time when it was necessary to do more with less.

40. **Mr. Kitano** (Japan) said that the fall in contributions for humanitarian assistance had made it difficult to meet growing humanitarian needs with official development assistance alone, and it was necessary to expand the funding base. It was important to seek out non-traditional donors and strengthen engagement with the private sector while simultaneously enhancing relations with international financial institutions. Many major donors were facing financial constraints, and some donors were prioritizing project-based contributions due to considerations of visibility and accountability for taxpayers.

United Nations agencies were making ever greater efforts to secure funding, in particular for projects. It was important to note that the need for flexible funding was not enough to secure increased contributions and that approaches to persuade individual countries were needed. Experience with protracted crises demonstrated that humanitarian assistance alone was insufficient; a comprehensive approach based on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus was urgently needed for the humanitarian reset. Crisis recovery must begin concurrently with life-saving efforts from day one; the engagement of development agencies in crisis recovery should therefore be firmly anchored within the humanitarian system. Japan fully supported the humanitarian reset; eliminating silos between agencies, localization and the strength and role of humanitarian capital were particularly important.

41. **Ms. Origoni** (Secours Islamique France) said that deprioritizing protection of children in situations of conflict in the context of budgetary cuts and humanitarian reform carried significant risks. Dedicated budgets for the protection of children across a number of organizations at local and national level had fallen by 40 per cent on average. The suspension of specific protective interventions had devastating consequences for children, including recruitment into armed groups, early marriage, forced labour and exploitation. Budgetary cuts in other sectors likewise increased protection risks by reducing access to essential services such as education, water, hygiene and sanitation. The cuts were also weakening the monitoring of serious violations committed against children in armed conflicts and accountability mechanisms such as the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, which was dependent on the presence of specialist protection staff on the ground. Child protection was already systematically underfunded; in 2023, it had accounted for only 1.6 per cent of total humanitarian aid. She called on all parties to recognize child protection as a vital sector, ensure that it was at the centre of humanitarian reform, advocate for an increase of funding for specific child protection programmes, firmly support the renewal of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, contribute directly to funding for the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, and integrate a children’s rights perspective into all mechanisms for ensuring accountability for violations of international humanitarian law.

42. **Ms. Daniels** (Deputy Director General of Operations, International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that, in many cases, remittances accounted for more inflows than official development assistance and foreign direct investment combined, and went straight into the hands of the most affected individuals. As the only form of funding flow that had consistently increased year-on-year for approximately the past 20 years, remittances played a critical role in a situation of reduced funding and increased need. IOM was looking closely at how to make use of remittance investment in solutions at the local level. Remittances were received predominantly by women, who were investing in education and health. That form of funding was financing sustainable development goals in some of the most fragile and crisis-affected contexts and were increasing household savings, which could then be put to good use. Work was being done with the International Fund for Agricultural Development to develop instruments at the local level that people could invest in as part of efforts to build resilience and transition from humanitarian assistance to long-term development outcomes.

43. **Mr. Agbor** (UNICEF Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that there were clear examples of conflict situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere in which severe funding cuts would make it impossible to protect children or respond to crises. Given that the record levels of rape and other forms of sexual violence witnessed in the country in 2024 had already been reached halfway through 2025, the consequences of such cuts would be grave. While alternative methods of funding were important, there would be no positive change in the level of humanitarian response needed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo unless Member States were able to step up efforts to secure peace in the country.

44. **Mr. Konyndyk** (President, Refugees International) said that, between 1990 and 2011, the total number of displaced persons had remained stable, as the international community had succeeded in ending a number of conflicts during that period. The fact that, since 2011, the number of displaced persons had increased by two and a half times was indicative of a failure to end conflicts, which in turn was affecting the level of need for humanitarian funding. The Government of Kenya was currently piloting the Shirika Plan, an innovative

plan under which refugees were being accorded expanded labour rights and greater freedom of movement with a view to reducing the level of aid required to sustain the refugee population in the long term. The damage that actions of a small number of major donors had inflicted on the financial foundations of the humanitarian system had demonstrated the importance of increasing the number of stakeholders in the system to improve its resilience.

45. **Ms. Quirke** (Global Partnerships Lead, Humanitarian and Development, Visa Government Solutions) said that more should be done to involve young people in developing solutions to the challenges faced in the humanitarian sector. Young people had grown up with technology and were more comfortable using digital tools such as cryptocurrency than older generations. They were also more aspirational by nature and could bring a less fragmented perspective to efforts to help recipients of aid become thriving citizens.

46. **Ms. Veloza** (Director, Genfami) said that, faced with an insufficient level of humanitarian assistance, her organization was finding innovative ways to assist the most vulnerable communities by helping people to become true agents of change. In contexts of armed conflict, leaders who understood the local situation were needed in addition to humanitarian actors and donors.

47. **Ms. Doughten** (Director, Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) said that it was vital to translate the large amount of consensus into concrete action, rising above political discourse to support those most in need. Increased funding should be provided to national and local partners as directly, accessibly and flexibly as possible. Where direct funding could not be provided, contributions to pooled funds that supported coordinated and principled humanitarian action with an emphasis on protection should be increased. As part of efforts to review the pooled funds managed by OCHA, in-depth consultations had been held with local and national partners, NGOs, donors and Member States to determine how such mechanisms could be made as accessible as possible. Funding to women-led organizations should be increased and women and young people should be included in discussions. A shift should be made from reactive to anticipatory action. To achieve the change desired would require improved partnerships between humanitarian, development and peace actors and with the private sector; increased advocacy; and improved investment directed in the most efficient way possible.

48. **The President**, summing up, said that predictable and flexible financing mechanisms worked, but needed to be expanded to reach more local actors and respond to evolving crisis patterns. Diversifying the funding base required genuine partnership, not just appeals. It was also necessary to fundamentally rethink humanitarian financing structures to be strategic in the light of the current and future challenges at stake, rather than simply creating a smaller version of the current system. The path forward required immediate action, long-term commitment and political will. She encouraged all stakeholders to take concrete next steps, donors to explore innovating financing mechanisms, implementing partners to strengthen and embolden local capacity and all parties to continue pushing the boundaries of what humanitarian financing could and should achieve.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.