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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 21 July 2011, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Grauls (Vice-President) (Belgium)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Grauls (Belgium), Vice-President, took the chair.

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

Humanitarian affairs segment (*continued*)

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (A/66/81-E/2011/117 and E/2011/L.33) (*continued*)

Special Event on the Humanitarian Situation in the Horn of Africa

1. **The President** said that the world was following the progress of the humanitarian crisis currently afflicting the Horn of Africa. The number of people affected was very high, the situation extremely grave. On the preceding day, the United Nations had declared a state of famine in two regions of southern Somalia. It would have been unthinkable for the Economic and Social Council not to pay special attention to the matter.

2. **Ms. Amos** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that if the international community did not act immediately, the food crisis – the gravest the world had even known – would spread to the rest of south Somalia within two months, and its effects could spill over to countries across the region. The word “famine” was not one to be used lightly: it reflected extreme food shortages, severe malnutrition, and spiralling mortality rates.

3. Across the Horn of Africa, 11.5 million people (3.7 million in Somalia, 4.5 million in Ethiopia, 2.4 million in Kenya, close to 150,000 in Djibouti, and probably many more in Eritrea) were in urgent need of international help. Of the US\$ 1.9 billion already requested to help Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, only half had been funded. Assistance needed to be stepped up to people in their own countries and to the increasing number of refugees who had fled across borders. Over the course of July, 1,300 Somalis had arrived every day in the Dadaab refugee camp, in Kenya, 80 per cent of them women and children, with half the children suffering from malnutrition. This camp, the largest in the world, was dangerously overcrowded, with 380,000 refugees and a backlog of 26,000 more awaiting registration. The Kenyan Government had agreed to the opening of a new camp, but it too would rapidly reach capacity. In Ethiopia,

2,000 people a day were arriving at the Dolo refugee camp. For Kenya and Ethiopia to have kept their borders open at such a difficult time was greatly to be appreciated. The humanitarian agencies currently did not have the resources that were needed to deal with the scale of the crisis. During the past two weeks projects worth more than US\$ 50 million had been approved under the Central Emergency Response Fund.

4. The situation in Somalia was particularly difficult: since June, while 270,000 people had received food rations in the regions of Hiraan and Banadir, including 85,000 in Mogadishu, and some 54,000 more people had received food assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bay, Lower Shabelle and Mogadishu, with 3.7 million people in need that was not enough. The recent announcement by Al-Shabaab that they would open areas under their control to the humanitarian community was welcome, but the group would have to provide assurances that the 11 conditions previously put on the World Food Programme (WFP) would not be imposed. Episodes of drought were happening more and more often. As for the reasons that more had not been done to pre-empt the crisis, it was important to recall that the humanitarian community, aware of the imminence of the crisis, had begun issuing warnings in November 2010 and had been preparing for the situation, but that there were no easy answers in that area. To stop the situation from worsening and becoming an annual event, it had to be given the urgent attention it required and a number of specific initiatives had to be taken (distribution of drought-resistant seeds, irrigation, creation of rural infrastructure and establishment of livestock programmes), as well as improvements to the early warning system.

5. **Mr. Guterres** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) stressed the need for action that took into account the three aspects of the crisis (refugees, conflicts and drought in Somalia and drought in the region). Referring to the particularly high level of discrimination with which Somali refugees were faced in the world, he appealed to all countries to offer them asylum and protection, without discrimination or stigmatization of any kind. A quarter of the Somali population had been internally displaced or had fled abroad, and the situation was constantly worsening. Since early 2011, 166,000 Somalis had crossed the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti and, the day before, 2,200 people had fled the country. The policy of ready welcome pursued by neighbouring

countries, especially Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Yemen, attested to a great generosity, but could also have impacts on the economy and the security of those countries. Consequently, the international community must demonstrate solidarity not only with the Somali refugees but also with the countries receiving them. The refugees arriving at the camps were in a desperate situation. At Dolo Ado (Ethiopia), the third-largest refugee camp in the world, 50 per cent of the children under 5 were suffering from global acute malnutrition and 26.8 per cent of them from severe acute malnutrition. Those record-breaking rates far exceeded the reference level of 1 per cent. The mortality rates in the camp were 15 times higher than in Sub-Saharan Africa and seven times higher than the reference threshold for emergency situations. Massive humanitarian assistance had to be delivered into Somalia to head off the danger that the population would flee the country under disastrous conditions. All parties concerned, international organizations and donor countries alike, must take every step possible to build up their capacity to supply the massive humanitarian assistance that would put an end to that tragic situation or, at least, reduce its effects on the population. Finally, solidarity with the countries bordering on Somalia, which were also suffering a period of drought, was essential. He urged the community to take all necessary measures (preparedness, prevention and cooperation in various fields) to prevent such a crisis from recurring in the future.

6. **Mr. Diarra** (Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) stated that 11 million people, including 2 million children, were suffering hunger, malnutrition, fatal diseases, shortage of water and a lack of basic health care, in the drought-affected areas in Somalia, in Ethiopia, in Kenya and in Djibouti. The launch of a joint action bringing together all stakeholders had been announced the previous day by the World Food Programme. It was essential to act fast, since the long-term consequences were likely to be much more disastrous than the immediate effects.

7. The international humanitarian organizations blamed the international community for not heeding their warnings and not reacting to the advance of famine. The United Nations had estimated the

humanitarian needs at US\$ 1.87 billion, but an additional 1 million dollars was required right now. All the parties concerned, including foundations, the private sector and civil society organizations, were urged to contribute to the efforts to the fullest extent of their capacities and their remits. The international community must facilitate access to basic services for the populations affected, in particular by air-lifting high-nutritional-value food supplements to the strategic areas that were the hardest to reach, as WFP had proposed. Assistance must be coordinated and placed under the control of the United Nations so as to optimize the scarce resources that were available. It was important to tackle the underlying causes of the crisis by taking long-term measures, in particular by promoting a long-term recovery in the areas of health, food and education. Sophisticated early-warning systems must be put in place, as must appropriate mechanisms to tackle the crisis in its early stages. International resources must be deployed ahead of a crisis. Finally, action must also be taken to assist the neighbouring countries, who were in the front lines of the fight against the crisis.

8. **Ms. Georgieva** (Member of the European Commission with responsibility for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response), stressing that the situation was exceptionally grave and that exceptional measures would be required to deal with it, voiced the determination of Europe to contribute its assistance to the humanitarian action currently under way in the Horn of Africa. To that end, 70 million euros had already been donated to the countries of the region affected by the drought. The Commissioner with responsibility for Development, in the course of a visit to the region, had announced a commitment of more than US\$ 90 million. The exchange of views with the representatives of the WFP, of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, of Doctors without Borders and of the Norway Refugee Council, during the recent meeting of the European Union Council of Ministers Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid, offered prospects of a rapid increase in the assistance for the affected countries and improved coordination of efforts. Somalia was the country the most affected by the drought. The ongoing conflicts weakened the resilience of the population, and the capacities of the humanitarian agencies on the ground were very limited. The European Union undertook a firm commitment to enhance its support to the

countries bordering on Somalia which were demonstrating great generosity despite their own problems resulting from the drought and despite the looming crisis following on from the influx of refugees.

9. **Mr. Getahun** (Ethiopia) said that the revised version of the recently published evaluation report “Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners” highlighted the enormous needs noted during the second half of 2011 in terms of food, water, agriculture, health care and education. The Government of Ethiopia undertook to continue to direct the humanitarian activities and coordination efforts at the federal level, in cooperation with its humanitarian partners; to redouble its efforts to reduce long-term vulnerabilities and to strengthen the capacity of local communities to withstand disasters; and to make fully operational the disaster management mechanism. In addition, the Government was working unceasingly to ensure food security, through the effective implementation of a five-year growth plan, in particular for the benefit of cattle farmers, and by adopting major measures aimed at improving agricultural productivity, some of which had resulted in the allocation of 10 per cent of the budgetary appropriations to agricultural objectives.

10. The recent visit to the region by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had drawn attention to the plight of the Somali people and had triggered measures which had improved the situation in the refugee camps. As a result of the deployment of additional personnel, the bottlenecks in the transit centres had been reduced and a fourth refugee camp should soon be opening. A food programme directed towards the refugees suffering from severe malnutrition was just about to become operational. The Government of Ethiopia would continue to receive Somali refugees and welcomed the measures announced by the various Member States and in particular by the European Union. The regions that had been cleared of Al-Shabaab should receive urgent assistance. Ethiopia would strive to the limit of its capacity to meet the needs on the ground.

11. **Mr. Mohamed Ismail** (Observer for Somalia) said that Somalia was extremely grateful to the countries that were already helping it to tackle the current crisis. He observed that the emergency in Somalia had already lasted for twenty years, which was a situation all the more paradoxical since the country

was rich in human and natural resources. There was no short- or medium-term prospect of an improvement in security conditions, in particular in the south and centre, and the population’s capacity for resistance was in danger of diminishing rapidly.

12. The role of the United Nations system in the political, humanitarian and emergency assistance spheres was not well understood by the local populations, which were unable to make a distinction between the various bodies and agencies. The Organization became a target in political and military discourse. The humanitarian agencies too often prescribed remedies that required a high level of technical knowledge and did not meet the needs of the local population. There was a need, therefore, to think up solutions based on the principle of shared responsibility and to establish partnerships with the local private sector, which had easy access to all the regions of the country. In particular, imports of foodstuffs should be subsidized in order to lower prices and thereby provide relief to poor households. The money transfer agencies could be called upon to directly free up liquid assets. The trading networks had access to the population in its entirety; they were working every day without respite, whatever the situation on the ground. For their part, the donors were generally guided by internal procedures and by objectives drawn up at the international level. They were looking for guarantees that the funds donated would not fall into the hands of terrorists or warlords, nor would they be used against the population.

13. He considered that at least 20 per cent of emergency assistance needed to be allocated to socioeconomic recovery. He called on the international community to support the deployment of military engineering units or civilian protection units of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to open up humanitarian corridors and rebuild the socioeconomic infrastructure, also involving the local private sector. The humanitarian assistance programmes must be easily implementable by local partners, without technical or bureaucratic obstacles. Since the United Nations was not the ideal forum in which to combat radicalization, there was a need to facilitate the participation of genuine Islamic charitable organizations in the humanitarian operations and awareness-raising activities in Somalia.

14. **Mr. Mboya Okeyo** (Observer for Kenya) stressed that the drought afflicting the Horn of Africa was the

worst that the region had known for sixty years. While the flood of refugees into Kenya continued to grow, the Kenyan Government, which had declared a state of emergency, was making every effort to meet its international obligations, but it could not take on the consequences of the crisis without the help of the international community.

15. The influx of starving refugees was putting Kenya in a precarious security situation. Kenya called for more robust assistance to the countries taking in refugees and in that connection welcomed the memorandum of understanding signed with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the Security Partnership Programme. The international community must redouble its efforts to find long-lasting solutions to the political crisis in Somalia, tackling its underlying causes. It must make long-term investments in water resource management, cattle-farming and agriculture. A distinction had to be drawn between the refugees who were leaving their country owing to a political conflict and those who were fleeing to escape famine. The international community had not clearly defined how to manage the instances of population displacement arising out of climate-related catastrophes, and should therefore consider setting out a secure perimeter inside Somali territory through which to route humanitarian assistance.

16. The United Nations should strengthen its partnerships with all stakeholders, in particular with governments, and enter into a frank and open dialogue with a view to adapting to new situations. It should evaluate the mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and draw up strategies for the future. Well aware of the importance of preparedness in emergency situations, Kenya, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was drawing up a disaster risk management policy and had established local committees to attend to these issues.

17. **Mr. Larsen** (World Food Programme) reported that the Programme had been able to act rapidly thanks to its having 2,000 staff on the ground in the region, 200 of them in Somalia, and innovative advance financing, forward food purchasing and pre-positioning mechanisms, underpinned by flexible and predictable funding provided by multilateral and multi-year donors. Even before famine had been declared in Somalia and the number of people in an emergency situation increased to over 11 million, the WFP had

already been supplying food and nutrition assistance to 7 million people in the Horn of Africa, including 700,000 Somalis in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as more than a million people in Mogadishu and other regions of the country. The World Food Programme thanked its principal donors, especially the United Kingdom for stepping up so strongly to the crisis, and the European Union for providing naval escorts to protect WFP cargos from piracy. The support of donors was essential not only to save lives but also for safety nets and livelihood support, land and water assets creation and for strengthening the resilience of vulnerable people.

18. It was not by coincidence that the only areas so far hit by famine were the south and the centre of Somalia, to which the World Food Programme did not have access. The amount that would need to be contributed to finance the programmes of action in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Karamoja region and Djibouti in the coming six months totaled US\$ 340 million, assuming that security conditions would allow operations in the south of Somalia.

19. **Mr. Abdillahi** (Observer for Djibouti) said that, like other countries in the region, Djibouti had been dealing for several years with a severe endemic drought which was causing problems in the life of the rural populations. According to the most recent estimates, 120,000 people from the most vulnerable segments of the population were seriously affected by the catastrophe, which had already caused considerable damage both to harvests and to cattle-farming. The drought had also resulted in a deterioration in the nutritional status of the entire child population, dramatically reduced water reserves and decimated the country's livestock. The Prime Minister had recently presided over a meeting to ratify the humanitarian appeal intended to mitigate the effects of the drought in the Republic of Djibouti. The international community must contribute the funds necessary to make a reality of the projects intended to lessen the consequences of the drought on the country's rural populations. Djibouti would hold to its policy of open borders to receive its Somali brothers.

20. **Ms. Georgieva** (Member of the European Commission with responsibility for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response) expressed appreciation to the affected countries for their emphasis on the need not only for action against the current crisis but also for action to tackle its

underlying causes and support for sustainable development in order to avoid new crises. The European Union was firmly resolved to do everything in its power to make the local populations of the Horn of Africa better equipped to withstand future crises.

21. The European Union had heard the appeals for greater action in Somalia. While some regions of the country were not safe, others were fully in a state to receive assistance from the international community. Thus all should do everything possible to come to the aid of Somalia, and every effort would be made to ensure that the assistance directly reached the affected populations.

22. **Mr. Roux** (Belgium), observing that domestic problems could not be an excuse for countries to turn their backs on the crisis, announced the decision of the Belgian Council of Ministers to provide 3 million euros to the WFP, to be divided up equally among Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Belgium had also contributed 1 million euros to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as part of its programme for the Horn of Africa. At the same time, the Belgian Development Cooperation agency was supporting local populations and coordinating with non-governmental organizations and the other United Nations agencies on the ground actions directed towards countering the devastating effects of the drought, aggravated by the long-running conflicts ravaging the region.

23. **Mr. Stormark** (Norway) announced that Norway, which had already donated US\$ 43 million to the fight against the crisis in the Horn of Africa, had recently resolved to grant a further US\$ 5.5 million for humanitarian assistance on the ground, to be handled essentially by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

24. **Mr. Sammis** (United States of America) recalled that the United States, the leading donor of emergency assistance in the region, had already made a contribution of \$US 459 million in 2011 and that an additional contribution of US\$ 28 million had just been announced by the Secretary of State. Deeply concerned by the safety and security conditions affecting the humanitarian workers in Somalia, the United States had initiated consultations with the international organizations that had worked in the region in order to be sure that Al-Shabaab had genuinely changed its policy and was committed to not hindering humanitarian operations. The United States called on all stakeholders to advocate

for unhampered access to all the people affected. Turning to the estimate that 300 million dollars would be needed in the course of the coming two months to prevent the famine from spreading to the whole of southern Somalia, he asked how soon the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) would be revising the level of that initial estimate in the light of recent events.

25. **Ms. Stone** (Australia) said that her Government, very concerned by the famine raging in Somalia, had taken rapid steps to respond to the crisis and the day before had announced an additional contribution of 30 million Australian dollars, which, combined with the 11.2 million dollars initially contributed, represented a total of 41.2 million Australian dollars for the Horn of Africa, intended to supply food rations, health care and shelters to some 6.7 million people in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. It was planned to provide the funds to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, the Somalia Common Humanitarian Fund and to Australian non-governmental organizations. Australia would also donate 1.2 million Australian dollars to Save the Children and 2 million to FAO. Australia intended to follow the situation closely and declared its readiness to contribute such assistance as should prove necessary.

26. **Mr. Whitby** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that his country, aware of the gravity of the situation in the Horn of Africa, had announced an additional contribution of 52.2 million pounds sterling, bringing its total contribution to more than 90 million pounds. It was time for the international community to work with the local and national authorities to help the populations in need as necessary. The United Kingdom called on other States to mobilize funds and, aware that the States affected had a decisive role to play in the measures that needed to be taken to counter the crisis, urged those countries to mobilize quickly, in particular through providing information on the number of people affected. He urged all actors to respect humanitarian principles and to allow the humanitarian assistance agencies free access, enabling them to provide the necessary assistance to the populations in need. The international community must ensure that humanitarian workers were not hampered in any way in their operations and were shielded from reprisals.

27. **Mr. Schikorski** (Germany) stated that Germany had announced an initial contribution of 15 million euros in humanitarian assistance and was currently examining the possibility of making an additional contribution. Germany called on all parties involved to respect the principles of humanitarian law, to concentrate on the needs of the peoples and to remove obstacles, including by streamlining administrative procedures that risked slowing or hindering the delivery of assistance. There was a need to continue with the coordinated implementation of long-term risk reduction measures in the Horn of Africa.

28. **Mr. Mattéi** (France) said that his Government would shortly be announcing the level of France's contribution in emergency assistance to combat the food crisis. Taking the view that the international community must tackle the underlying causes of the crisis, France, which had just taken on the presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20), had called for an emergency meeting of the FAO to be held in July, in conjunction with the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which would make it possible to assess the scale of the crisis with a view to coordinating international assistance. France had made food security one of the priorities of its presidency of the G-20. An action plan adopted by the ministers of the G-20 contained specific measures to increase world agricultural production, guarantee food security for the poorest countries, strengthen international cooperation and combat price instability affecting basic foodstuffs.

29. **Mr. Thomsen** (Observer for Denmark) said that his country had been contributing for many years to development assistance for Somalia and the refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia. Since the beginning of 2011, his country had contributed US\$ 32 million in humanitarian assistance for the Horn of Africa, including US\$ 19 million over the past two weeks. The Danish delegation considered that the international community must act in a coordinated manner and taking a long-term view, and must be committed to remaining on the ground for several years in order to be able to reach a sustainable solution.

30. **Mr. Bruck** (Observer for Ireland) said that at the beginning of 2011, his country had contributed 4 million euros to programmes implemented by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations active in the region. A contribution of 1 million euros had been made in July 2011 to the World Food Programme and to

the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, bringing to 5.6 million euros Ireland's total contribution in the current year to initiatives intended to come to the aid of threatened populations.

31. **Ms. Favi** (Italy) said that her country had always considered the Horn of Africa a priority in its cooperation efforts and intended now to intensify its efforts to deal with the deteriorating situation.

32. **Mr. Thomas** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - FAO) stressed that East Africa, and in particular the south of Somalia, had sufficient resources to make it food self-sufficient. Most of the people affected were cattle farmers, crop farmers or fishermen; the international community must help them to preserve their survival strategies, thereby avoiding their being forced to join the overcrowded refugee camps. The crop farmers had a truly pressing need for seed and fertilizer, and the cattle farmers needed vaccines, water and forage for their cattle. Setting up "food for work" programmes would make it possible for the populations of southern Somalia to rebuild the infrastructure and to earn some money. FAO, which had been active in Somalia for several years, had not halted its programmes, but it needed more resources in order to be able to enlarge them such that the most vulnerable would be able to benefit from them.

33. **Ms. Amos** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) thanked all the States that had announced financial contributions, following the previous day's declaration of a state of famine in Somalia. An emergency appeal, as part of a revised appeal procedure intended to widen the presence of the humanitarian organizations on the ground, would be launched in the coming days and additional personnel had already been dispatched to Somalia and Nairobi.

34. **Mr. Diarra** (Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) repeated that it was urgent for the international community to act in a coordinated fashion to reverse the trend and halt the advance of the famine. He welcomed the proposals of the Somali delegation having to do with the establishment of new mechanisms to compensate for the shortcomings of the United Nations system, provided that transparency in the management of humanitarian affairs could be

ensured, and provided that it would be possible to have accountability for the utilization of resources and to observe the effects of operations on the ground. The United Nations system must adopt a coordinated and integrated approach and take measures for the long term in order to ensure sustainable and inclusive development. He also thanked the States that had announced contributions.

35. **Mr. Guterres** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) paid tribute to the countries that were taking in Somali refugees and the donor community for its generous support for humanitarian activities, encouraging the donors to continue showing solidarity. He called on all actors present in Somalia to respect all of the principles of international humanitarian law so as to guarantee humanitarian workers free access to all of the affected populations.

36. **The President** announced that the Special Event was concluded and strongly urged all Member States, international organizations, humanitarian organizations and the private sector to redouble their efforts to help the peoples of the Horn of Africa. He invited the Council to resume the general debate.

General debate (continued)

37. **Mr. Leon** (United Nations Human Settlements Programme – UN-HABITAT) said that the majority of the world's population lived in urban areas and it had been estimated that a third lived in informal dwellings or slums, a factor which made them vulnerable to natural disasters. UN-HABITAT contributed its expertise to the management of humanitarian operations in the event of major catastrophes such as those that had befallen Haiti and Pakistan. As part of the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group, UN-HABITAT had adopted, in November 2010, its first strategy aimed at responding to the humanitarian challenges in urban areas. The strategy emphasized the need to enter into multipartite partnerships, in particular among local government and national government, the disaster relief agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, so as to strengthen the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian operations and avoid duplication of effort. The strategy also advocated drawing a distinction between the chronic needs of the urban poor and the specific needs engendered by a crisis, in order to be able to offer the appropriate assistance. That

entailed widening the present conception of humanitarian action to take account, for example, of the needs of families taking in the victims of catastrophes. There was a need to strengthen not only the risk reduction and advance planning mechanisms at national level, but also the capacities of the local populations.

38. In the view of UN-HABITAT, reducing disaster risks and improving advance planning were dependent on improving urban planning, land utilization and local economic development, and must be initiated as soon as possible in recovery operations. Land-use planning was also important if displaced populations were to be offered suitable shelter, sanitation services and possibilities for rehousing. Finally, an improvement in urban governance, based on decentralized systems for disaster management, was essential to the effectiveness of early warning systems and other risk reduction measures, as were coordination and cooperation among the various actors and the exchange of information. UN-HABITAT, which stood fully behind the Secretary-General's call for agencies to work in partnership to strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance in a changing world, fully intended to pursue its collaboration with other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and local governments.

39. **Mr. Durieux** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR) said that the refugees who were flooding into the various countries were engendering huge pressure on the resources of the local populations. The problem of refugees, by definition, concerned all the States through which they transited. In addition to providing assistance to refugees, UNHCR acted as a mediator between States, which required that it have an ample network of partners. Furthermore, it was essential to have a degree of flexibility in funding upon emerging from a humanitarian crisis such as a conflict, because at that point it was necessary to prepare for the next crisis and put in place early warning mechanisms, something that might sometimes be viewed unfavourably by the country's authorities.

40. It was essential not to overlook the importance of capacity-building for the countries that were taking in refugees, in order to enable them to meet their responsibilities of protecting them. Helping those countries was one of the main justifications for UNHCR's protection activities, but as the number of

crises grew, resources were lacking, particularly since, as was well known, humanitarian action extended well beyond the phase of emergency relief. Finally, it was impossible to overstate the necessity of effective coordination: UNHCR, which had concluded numerous cooperative agreements with States, partner United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, was fully prepared to contribute to the sharing of knowledge and experience.

41. **Mr. Falatar** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO) said that in conflict-affected countries, some 28 million children of primary school age were not going to school, and millions of young people were lacking long-term prospects of learning. Every year, at least the same number of children and young people had their education interrupted by a natural disaster. But a child or an adolescent whose life was turned upside down by a conflict or a disaster needed security, a framework to give structure, continuity and routine, which was what school could provide. Further, at school the child or the adolescent would receive essential information on health and protection, and would be able to receive basic humanitarian services. The school environment could also strengthen the pupils' capacity for resistance, at the same time promoting integration and laying down the foundations for recovery, development and prevention.

42. However, within the field of humanitarian assistance, education remained one of the least adequately funded sectors, receiving according to OCHA only 1.4 per cent of humanitarian assistance funds in 2011. With its partners, UNESCO was doing what it could to rectify that situation, by promoting rapid capacity-building for teachers and those in charge of educational programmes at national level. The Member States were calling on the Organization ever more frequently for specific undertakings aimed at filling in the gaps during the emergency relief phase. In many cases, those undertakings had to do with the secondary and higher levels of the educational system, technical and vocational training, and non-formal education, as well as the planning and administration of educational programmes. In the view of UNESCO, which sometimes had a relatively modest presence relative to the other humanitarian actors, it was crucial to go on strengthening the mechanisms for coordination of humanitarian assistance.

43. **Mr. Carty** (United Nations Children's Fund – UNICEF) welcomed the concern shown by the Council for education in emergency situations. Now that the crucial role of education in conflict-related emergency situations was recognized and allowed for, there was a need for joint and coordinated efforts to tackle the huge task it represented. The State or non-State parties to armed conflicts were increasingly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, 224 schools were said to have suffered one or more types of attack during the last phase of conflict. The adoption by the United Nations Security Council of resolution 1998 (S/RES/1998 (2011)) was an event of decisive significance in that the wording provided a solid basis for mobilization on the issue and a legal framework for action to be taken against the perpetrators of attacks on schools or hospitals. Nevertheless, unless resources were provided at national level to implement programmes aimed at protecting educational establishments and safeguarding access to education, the resolution would not transform the lives of children. In the event of natural disasters, appeals for funds for humanitarian assistance on average brought forth only 38 per cent of the amounts requested for the field of education.

44. As for the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, which was having very grave impacts on children, the gross rates of under-5 mortality were beyond imagining. It was urgent to mobilize resources, but it was also important to ensure that the international community did not slacken off in its concern once the crisis was no longer front-page news.

45. **The President** announced that the Council had concluded its general debate on item 5 of the agenda.

Decision on draft resolution E/2011/L.33

46. **The President** invited the Council to adopt draft resolution E/2011/L.33 entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", which he had submitted pursuant to informal consultations. He informed the Council that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

47. *Draft resolution E/2011/L.33 was adopted.*

48. **Ms. Vareas Silva** (Colombia) thanked Australia and Indonesia for facilitating the process of drafting the resolution, and the Group of 77 and China for their active participation in the drafting. Colombia observed

that assistance should be provided at the request of the State concerned and with its consent, and that the principles governing humanitarian assistance must be respected, as must the overriding role of the State in organizing, coordinating and implementing the assistance on its territory. It was also important to observe the national and local institutional structure and to support the strengthening of national and local coordination mechanisms. That coordination as well as the knowledge and experience of the national and local actors contributed to strengthening the capacities of the State, to identifying best practices, to drawing lessons and to establishing relationships of trust and complementarity between international humanitarian actors and government entities, which would then result in better undertakings, closer concern and non-overlapping activities. In addition, Colombia emphasized that the coordination mechanisms of the States must not be regarded as instruments of last resort, but as the first choice. Finally, within the context of the reform of the United Nations and measures seeking to enhance coherence, it was important to establish interinstitutional coordination mechanisms intended to enhance the technical, human and financial capacities of all the bodies whose role was to go into action in the event of a disaster.

49. **Ms. Amos** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) particularly welcomed the importance that the Member States attached to the need for effective coordination of international humanitarian assistance, and their support for the efforts that had been made to improve that coordination.

50. Returning to the main points of the debate, she stressed the need to provide greater accountability vis-à-vis the populations concerned and to encourage them to take a greater part in the decisions that affected them; to cooperate more closely with local, regional and national partners in preparing for and forecasting disasters and responses; and to continue efforts aimed at strengthening the management of humanitarian operations at all levels, with an emphasis on anticipation, preparedness and prevention. There was also a need to strengthen support to local and national partners in order to enable them to be better prepared for disasters. Furthermore, the role and the responsibilities of international actors needed to be clarified. Partnerships, essential to the provision of appropriate needs-based and principles-governed

humanitarian assistance, must be used to find innovative solutions and to examine in greater detail how to make the best use of the relative advantages of each partner. With regard to the funding of humanitarian action, the main needs were to allocate funds systematically to preparedness initiatives and to better manage the transition between the emergency relief phase and the phases of recovery and development. For their part, the accountings provided to donors and to the affected populations must provide clearly identifiable components.

51. Ms. Amos thanked the organizers of the numerous side events, during which issues had been examined such as the safety of women in the context of a humanitarian crisis, the impacts of migrations, urbanization and population growth, the preservation of access to education in emergency situations, the use of military and civilian protection resources and the assessment of humanitarian needs. By mid-2011, there were 21 appeals running, including 3 flash appeals. As the funding needed had increased by US\$ 500 million since the beginning of the year, the goal to be reached was US\$ 7.9 billion. The contributions received so far amounted to US\$ 3.6 billion, or 45 per cent of the total needed.

52. Ms. Amos said that the resolution just adopted recalled the importance of access to the people and of humanitarian principles; she added that progress had been made with regard to the acceptance of the modular approach, obligations linked to responsibilities and the need to take account of the acceptability of operations in the context of risk management strategies.

53. **The President** welcomed the fact that the Economic and Social Council had been able to pay special attention to the immediate difficulties and problems facing the world, in particular the efforts of the Government of South Sudan to build a new State and the humanitarian crisis pummeling the Horn of Africa.

54. The President announced that the Council had concluded its consideration of the topics included in the humanitarian affairs segment.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.