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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 July 2012, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. Arias (Vice-President) (Spain)

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In the absence of Mr. Koterec (Slovakia), Mr. Arias (Spain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (E/2012/77-A/67/89 and E/2012/85; E/2012/L.11)

1. **Mr. Nakonechnyi** (Ukraine) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by Cyprus on behalf of the European Union and supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2012/77-A/67/89). His delegation acknowledged the progress made in improving the leadership, coordination and accountability of the international humanitarian response.

2. Given the complexity of the global humanitarian context, however, a more comprehensive humanitarian system was required with stronger relationships at the global, regional and national levels. His delegation welcomed the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and emphasized the need for its timely implementation. The fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence should be preserved, and humanitarian personnel must have rapid and unimpeded access to emergency areas.

3. Existing financial mechanisms had proved effective in dealing with emergencies, but his delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for more consistent financing to support humanitarian responses, through both the Consolidated Appeal Process and the Central Emergency Response Fund.

4. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was an important global framework for activities aimed at protecting the international community from disasters. His delegation welcomed the outcomes of recent conferences on that theme in which the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the Strategy had participated, in particular the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Tohoku, Japan, in July 2012, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

5. His Government continued to assist countries affected by disasters, having provided humanitarian

assistance in 2011 to countries in the Horn of Africa through the World Food Programme.

6. His delegation expressed gratitude to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its support to Ukraine during the cold winter of 2011-12, and to the international community for its assistance with the construction of a steel arch to confine the damaged Chernobyl reactor. Ukraine welcomed the United Nations focus on the sustainable development of the communities affected by the Chernobyl disaster, as evidenced by the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (2006-2016) proclaimed by the General Assembly.

7. **Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar** (Pakistan) said that natural disasters were increasingly exacerbated by climate change and in recent years Pakistan had faced various humanitarian challenges, including an earthquake, floods and displacement of persons. His delegation was grateful to the United Nations and the international community for their assistance.

8. Based on its experience with humanitarian assistance, his Government had found that materials and expertise should be sourced locally, that trust was key to humanitarian partnerships among donors, international actors and States, that vulnerable countries needed capacity-building in order to be ready for emergencies, that all humanitarian actors — especially those delivering assistance on the ground — should be accountable, that the United Nations must ensure that funds were spent as intended, and that humanitarian actors must comply with host-country agreements.

9. Pakistan condemned attacks against humanitarian actors, whose safety and security were paramount. The Emergency Relief Coordinator should consult with Member States on the functioning of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and on reform of the humanitarian system. The staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should be recruited on an equitable geographical basis. Reporting mechanisms should be realistic and take into account the differences between humanitarian situations, with more sensitivity to specific characteristics and no politicization.

10. **Mr. Eriza** (Indonesia) said that disasters were occurring more frequently and with greater intensity, undermining development results that had been built up over many years. Climate change was causing greater weather hazards, leading to economic losses

which outstripped growth. Disaster risk reduction was essential in order to build resilience; recent experience showed that it preserved lives and development gains.

11. Recognizing that partnerships were crucial to face that challenge, Indonesia had established a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in disaster-prone provinces and a Disaster Resource Partnership which engaged construction and engineering companies to increase cooperation.

12. Since the local governments of vulnerable communities were at the forefront of national disaster initiatives, local capacities needed to be strengthened. The results of the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 22-25 October 2012, with the theme of “Strengthening Local Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction”, would be relevant in that regard.

13. Although international humanitarian coordination was essential, affected countries were primarily responsible for responding to emergencies and national Governments were best placed to determine the response required. In providing assistance, the international community should follow the basic humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality, as set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182, and respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and leadership of the affected country.

14. Indonesia therefore supported the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which was designed to improve humanitarian response through greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and partnership. Consultation and coordination with national authorities were essential in the provision of assistance, however, since international action should complement national efforts. The capacity of national authorities to assume the leadership of humanitarian responses should be strengthened.

15. While data-driven decision-making was vital for the provision of assistance, capacity-building was also needed prior to disasters to ensure that the affected countries had appropriate data supply systems in place.

16. **Mr. Kodama** (Japan) said that his delegation supported the discussions on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s transformative agenda as a policy response to recent unprecedented disasters in such places as Haiti and Pakistan. Japan had learned

from the great earthquake of 2011 that understanding the needs of those affected by crises was critical to effective humanitarian assistance; his Government was grateful to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team that had been sent to Japan after the earthquake.

17. While technical data infrastructure was important to understanding needs, local disaster preparedness involving resilient basic infrastructure such as transport and communication networks, protected by multi-layered and redundant systems, also needed to be strengthened.

18. His Government was building partnerships in the area of disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region in order to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance, for example by providing communications equipment, dispatching experts in information and communications technology, and supporting the creation of emergency reserves to strengthen the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management.

19. Since stronger partnerships also improved the accountability and legitimacy of humanitarian assistance, the donor base should be enlarged. His Government would therefore continue to build broader partnerships in conjunction with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and also expected that Office, in coordination with such agencies as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to take measures to address women’s needs. He welcomed the inclusion of a paragraph on volunteerism in the draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2012/L.11).

20. In February 2012, his Government had provided humanitarian assistance worth approximately \$23 million to the Sahel region, and thus welcomed the discussion at the Council’s informal event on “Humanitarian needs in the Sahel and the importance of building resilience”.

21. A smooth transition from emergency assistance to medium- and long-term development assistance was essential, since longer-term solutions to recurrent problems were more efficient than the repeated allocation of emergency assistance. Noting the request in the Secretary-General’s report (E/2012/77-A/67/89)

for Member States to establish financing instruments which would meet needs during the transition from relief to recovery, he wondered what type of instrument was intended and requested the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to consult with donor countries on the matter.

22. His Government was alarmed by the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, to which it had sent emergency aid, and urged all parties to ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance. It was also concerned by the situation in the Sudan and South Sudan, to which it had sent considerable humanitarian assistance in February 2011, and had decided to contribute emergency grant aid through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to support Sudanese refugees in South Sudan.

23. At the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction, Prime Minister Noda had expressed Japan's determination to lead international disaster risk reduction efforts, undertaking to provide \$3 billion for three years from 2013 for that purpose and to host the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015.

24. **Mr. Rischchynski** (Canada) said that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations were taking noteworthy steps to strengthen leadership capacity, which was crucial in a context of growing humanitarian needs and increasingly complex humanitarian situations. His delegation welcomed the practical steps being taken by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to implement the lessons learned from past crises and would continue to monitor the situation closely.

25. Accountability was closely linked to leadership. He welcomed the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's efforts to engage with Member States regarding the transformative agenda, since such transparency was an indicator of how far humanitarian agencies were prepared to be held accountable. Accountability to disaster victims was also vital; the current reforms would be successful only if they yielded tangible results for the most vulnerable. Agencies should ensure that humanitarian action took account of the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

26. Improved coordination and partnerships were essential to effective humanitarian action. Canada, for example, had responded quickly to the food crisis in the Sahel with \$41 million in humanitarian assistance. However, close cooperation among development, security, political and humanitarian actors was essential in order to resolve the underlying causes of a crisis. The emphasis should be on preparedness and resilience. Strengthened partnerships should include collaboration with the private sector, Member States and non-governmental organizations.

27. Humanitarian access, which was often constrained or denied, and the safety and security of humanitarian workers, who were frequently killed or injured in the line of duty, were concerns for his Government, which called for full, safe and unhindered access to allow humanitarian actors to deliver assistance.

28. **Mr. de Séllos** (Brazil) said that stronger partnerships between Member States and humanitarian actors would render United Nations assistance more effective. An example of such an initiative was the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership in a Changing World, launched in New York in 2011 by the Permanent Missions of Brazil and Sweden with the participation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Brazil also welcomed the cooperation among the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee members and developing countries. The latter should be involved in discussions of humanitarian assistance and could provide expertise regarding emergency response. Cooperation would help secure the wider membership's political backing for United Nations humanitarian assistance.

29. Assistance in the areas of food security and disaster risk reduction was closely linked to sustainable development. His delegation therefore welcomed the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference and the Secretary-General's zero hunger challenge. The global food crisis had not abated and recent fluctuations in food prices represented an added challenge. The humanitarian community must find new ways of mobilizing resources and implementing sustainable solutions. Member States should support cooperative initiatives involving beneficiary countries and such entities as the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme in order to ease the suffering of those facing food insecurity. His Government's strategy for

guaranteeing the right to adequate food was based on access to food programmes, conditional cash-transfer policies and family farming incentives.

30. A mutually supportive relationship between humanitarian cooperation and sustainable development would increase resilience and ensure a smoother transition from relief and recovery to development. Initiatives reflecting that approach had already begun, but more needed to be done. The United Nations should mainstream early recovery into all its humanitarian activities. Moreover, developing countries should be more fully involved in discussions of disaster risk reduction to ensure that emergency short-term relief was based on policies aimed at the promotion of sustainable socioeconomic development, food security and nutrition.

31. His delegation also welcomed regional and subregional humanitarian assistance arrangements. Cooperation had been strengthened within the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Brazil had been working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean on funding for disaster risk reduction. His delegation expressed thanks to Panama for hosting the Fifth Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Panama City in March 2012.

32. His delegation noted with concern the appeals by United Nations agencies regarding humanitarian assistance contributions. In recent years Brazil, a developing country, had increased its contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund, made financial donations to UNICEF and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) programmes, and provided food aid to various countries. Donor countries should increase their financial support so that relief could continue.

33. Complex emergencies remained a leading cause of suffering. All actors should cooperate to ensure safe, unhindered and timely access to populations for the provision of assistance. The principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence should be respected and Member States should fulfil their international legal obligations, support those displaced by conflicts and natural disasters, and ensure the safety of humanitarian operations and personnel. A safe environment for the delivery of assistance could best

be created, however, through durable solutions to the underlying causes of conflicts.

34. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) said that his delegation supported the statements of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Nepal on behalf of the Group of the Least Developed Countries. As emphasized in the Secretary-General's report (E/2012/77-A/67/89), humanitarian crises were becoming larger and more frequent. Planning methods should therefore be reviewed, and in that connection he welcomed the Secretary-General's five-year action agenda and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's transformative agenda.

35. Insufficient rainfall had made 2011-2012 difficult in most countries in the Sahel; in Burkina Faso, cereal production had been 20 per cent lower than the previous year. Preventive measures had been taken to deal with the crisis, including regular transfers of cereals from areas of overproduction to areas of low production. A plan to support the vulnerable populations had been adopted in conjunction with development partners and civil society.

36. An influx of Malian refugees had aggravated the situation. The international community had been called on for support and his Government had produced a response plan to provide emergency assistance. The refugee camps had been incorporated into the national health system, with more staff and operations. A large number of school-age children among the refugees and had been given the opportunity to continue their studies. The Food and Agriculture Organization had provided his Government with agro-industrial products for the refugees' livestock.

37. Much work remained to be done, and his delegation invited all partners to remain committed. It welcomed the joint statement of the high-level meeting organized in Brussels in June 2012 at the initiative of the European Commission, entitled "A partnership for resilience to food crises in the Sahel". His Government wished to thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its attention to the situation in Burkina Faso and the Sahel, praised the role of United Nations bodies in humanitarian assistance, and hoped that the draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2012/L.11) would be widely supported.

38. **Ms. Woldegiorgis** (Ethiopia) said that worldwide humanitarian needs had increased owing to multiple crises. In the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, humanitarian response capacity needed to be strengthened to address the prolonged drought. Africa needed a long-term food security solution to build strong communities resilient to disasters. The broadening of humanitarian response partnerships and the building of communities' resilience through disaster risk reduction were paramount. While resources needed to be mobilized to respond to emergencies, capacity-building to anticipate disasters was also critical, as was more investment in farming and irrigation technologies. Stronger partnerships were key to a sustainable long-term solution and an end to the cycle of humanitarian crises.

39. Ethiopia's disaster management system had been improved, with Government-led coordination of disaster management supported by all partners. Over 3.2 million people were receiving emergency relief in drought-affected areas. Security threats to humanitarian operations had arisen only in the Somali region and were being monitored by the Government.

40. A hub-and-spoke system for the delivery of relief had been operated with the World Food Programme since 2008. The system, which involved federal and regional agencies, had improved humanitarian access; more humanitarian actors had started operations in the region and 1.2 million people were receiving emergency food and other types of assistance.

41. National and regional coordination platforms had also been established for the joint resolution of issues. Humanitarian agencies had raised no access problems at meetings of these bodies, and no lives had been lost in the context of humanitarian assistance. The recent Inter-Agency Standing Committee Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa Drought Crisis had also shown the strength of humanitarian operations in Ethiopia.

42. Despite the progress made, Ethiopia was identified in the Secretary-General's report (E/2012/77-A/67/89) as having serious humanitarian access problems. That did not reflect the situation on the ground and would not help to advance the humanitarian agenda. His Government was committed to the core principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

43. **Ms. Kaup** (Observer for Estonia) said that Estonia aligned itself with the statement made by Cyprus on behalf of the European Union. Resilience was vital to the avoidance of suffering, but was difficult to build during conflicts and political instability. More than 1.5 billion people lived in fragile States, where civilians, in particular women and children, were the main victims of conflicts that displaced large numbers of people. Estonia condemned all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and in particular violations against children.

44. Humanitarian access was a key concern in complex emergencies. States were primarily responsible for caring for victims within their borders, but millions of displaced persons also depended on external assistance to survive. Estonia therefore urged all parties to comply with international law, which provided for the safe, rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies to affected populations. Access, however, and the safety of humanitarian workers remained major challenges. Estonia commended the Emergency Relief Coordinator's efforts to ensure access to emergency areas, most recently in the Syrian Arab Republic.

45. Estonia was a small but established humanitarian donor, supporting the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Central Emergency Response Fund. In 2012 it had contributed humanitarian assistance to the Sahel region and to Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

46. **Mr. Kamau** (Observer for Kenya) said that his delegation welcomed the emphasis placed on data-driven humanitarian decision-making and the enhancement of partnerships for humanitarian response in the Secretary-General's report (E/2012/77-A/67/89). In 2011, shortcomings in response capacity and logistics had hampered timely response to the disaster caused by the drought in the Horn of Africa; the lessons learned from that experience should be applied in responding to future disasters.

47. The problem of chronic humanitarian crises also required attention; the crisis in Somalia, for example, had become perennial, prompting thousands of refugees to flee to Kenya. The international community and the United Nations system should do more to assist

in such situations, when the burden fell disproportionately on neighbouring countries.

48. The transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should hasten disaster response at the Headquarters and field levels by easing the level of bureaucracy and would, he hoped, produce better outcomes for affected populations. His delegation would welcome information from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the current status of the reform process.

49. Discussions of whether resilience and disaster risk reduction came under the heading of humanitarian or development assistance should not be a barrier to action, which should take place along a continuum from preparedness to prevention to response, followed by a transition from recovery to development.

50. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that her Government had cooperated with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in both the assessment and response phases, and had provided facilities and protection to international and non-governmental organizations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182; that fact should have been reflected in the Secretary-General's report (E/2012/77-A/67/89). The report should also have mentioned the root causes of the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, which were to be found in the imposition by certain States of unilateral sanctions that were at odds with Security Council resolution 2043 (2012) and the mission of the Joint Special Envoy for the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Those sanctions were causing economic disruptions and suspensions of essential services throughout the country. The relief effort was also suffering from a lack of funding because international donors had not followed through on their pledges. Her Government had taken the lead in the humanitarian response and made assistance available to refugees to help them return to their lives and homes instead of continuing to be used as bargaining chips by terrorist groups and their supporters. Needs assessment exercises of the type mentioned in the report should be conducted in coordination with the Syrian Government.

51. The most serious omission in the report was the failure to mention humanitarian assistance in occupied territories, even though Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/8, pursuant to which the report had

been prepared, explicitly called on all States and parties to comply fully with the provisions of international humanitarian law including the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in order to protect and assist civilians in occupied territories. She wondered if she was to conclude from the absence of any mention of the situation of civilians in Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan that the Israeli occupation of those areas had finally come to an end. The paragraph on violence directed against humanitarian personnel similarly made no mention of Palestine or the occupied Syrian Golan.

52. **Ms. Knight** (Observer for New Zealand) said that humanitarian assistance and sustainable development were closely linked. The impact of climate change and the increased frequency of disasters required closer coordination and collaboration among those working in the humanitarian, development, political and security spheres. Disaster risk reduction coupled with national safety nets were the best means of mitigating the impact of humanitarian crises.

53. The humanitarian system should be more inclusive of new groups and organizations and develop stronger partnerships at the global, regional and national levels in order to ensure more effective coordination, better access and greater accountability to those affected. Data-driven decision-making would improve preparedness and response. Furthermore, the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence must be upheld as new partnerships were formed. Inclusiveness applied not only to humanitarian workers but also to those affected by emergencies, including women, children and persons with disabilities; joint needs assessments and data-driven decisions should take those groups into account.

54. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to strengthen coordination, leadership and accountability through its transformative agenda. The pilot project in South Sudan had produced outcomes — including a faster response, prevention of an epidemic and reduced costs — that were directly attributable to the agenda. The efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to promote faster, better and more coordinated humanitarian response would help achieve the main goal: to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies, particularly for the world's poorest.

55. **Mr. Viera** (Ecuador) said that accurate socioeconomic and geographical data was required to inform decision-making in the response to humanitarian crises and to gauge the impact of action taken. In the Andes and other subregions, the “DesInventar” disaster information management tool had been used to compile statistical data on disasters in order to enhance future planning for disaster response. Ecuador, which attached great importance to those efforts, had hosted the Fourth Regional Meeting on International Humanitarian Assistance Mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean in April 2011 in cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

56. His Government had provided funding to the National Secretariat for Risk Management to implement a data gathering and analysis system, which would ensure that disaster planning and response used the latest technology and met international standards. In that connection, exchange of experience was essential in order to build capacity using best practices.

57. Humanitarian intervention should include local capacity-building and put basic resources in place so as to reduce dependency over the long term. It should also involve coordination and cooperation among all actors, including the relevant government authorities and humanitarian and civil society organizations.

58. Fundamental to the Ecuadorian Constitution was safeguarding the rights of women, men and nature; on that basis, his Government had given priority in recent years not only to national disaster planning, risk reduction and response but also to regional solidarity through South-South cooperation and humanitarian assistance, particularly in Haiti.

59. **Mr. de Looz Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that the Sovereign Military Order of Malta welcomed the emphasis that the Secretary-General’s report (E/2012/77-A/67/89) placed on expanding partnerships in planning for humanitarian intervention. Noting that the Secretary-General had also called for support to education aimed at building a humanitarian community capable of cooperating more effectively, he said that in January 2012 the Grand Master of the Order had requested it to link the education of young people with engagement in humanitarian work.

60. The Order, which would celebrate its 900th anniversary in 2013, had a mission to assist the sick,

the poor and the abandoned regardless of race, religion or ethnicity. In 2011, over 13,000 volunteers had provided social assistance in medical-social centres and hospitals specialized in neurological rehabilitation for disabled children, Alzheimer’s patients and homeless people in France. The Order had also provided emergency relief and rehabilitation programmes for water and sanitation in Bolivia, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

61. Humanitarian response, which typically involved military forces, diplomats and humanitarian organizations now increasingly included the mass media, multinational companies, private security firms and non-State actors, who often had different objectives. That shift had raised the issue of how to achieve cooperation among all those stakeholders; unfortunately, no overall guidelines had yet been developed, because each crisis was unique.

62. **Mr. Jilani** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that, as the largest humanitarian network in the world, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement had a strong interest in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The Federation was committed to building national capacity and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities, since the demand for humanitarian assistance decreased when the vital needs of populations were met. Given that resilience was also crucial for sustainable development, humanitarian workers should build on the Rio+20 outcome and develop the concept of resilience in order to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and development efforts.

63. Legal preparedness was also part of a comprehensive approach to disaster risk management; Member States should work with their national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and the Federation to review and strengthen their disaster laws.

64. **Mr. Dorbes** (International Committee of the Red Cross) said that threats to the delivery of health care and the safety of health workers were a grave humanitarian concern. Recently, hospitals in Somalia had been shelled; ambulances in Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic had been shot at; and vehicles carrying wounded people in Afghanistan had been stopped for hours at checkpoints. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had published a report in 2011

that documented threats ranging from a generally poor security environment to denial of access to medical care, the arrest and kidnapping of health workers, looting of health-care facilities and even direct attacks on facilities, patients and personnel. The Committee had drawn three main conclusions: first, local health care providers were most at risk and most affected; second, State security forces and non-State armed forces were equally at fault for violence against health care providers; and third, 20 per cent of people affected by such violence were killed and 7 per cent were wounded. In response, it had launched a four-year initiative, entitled “Health Care in Danger”, to identify and implement measures to improve security and access to health care in armed conflicts and other emergencies. Aware that it could not tackle the problem alone, ICRC had raised the issue at the thirty-first International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

65. Working with national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, ICRC would conduct 10 workshops in 2012 and 2013 to involve Governments and independent experts from around the world in developing recommendations on practical measures to be taken by States to address a variety of problems. The Committee would report on progress at the thirty-second International Conference in 2015 and in the interim would engage with all those concerned to promote the implementation of the recommendations. He called upon all States to support the initiative.

66. **Ms. Muedin** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) said that recent crises had forced millions of people to flee their homes and take refuge within or outside the borders of their countries. Such forced migration, which was too complex for any one State to address alone, required better coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) worked with Governments, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons.

67. Humanitarian workers should not become overburdened by the process of delivering assistance but should focus on the people they were helping. At the end of 2011, there had been more than 42 million displaced persons worldwide, and several crises in 2012 had already caused further large-scale displacement. Assistance that was coordinated among governmental, non-governmental and United Nations

partners best served the interests of affected populations.

68. Based on its experience as the global cluster lead for camp coordination and camp management in natural disasters, IOM saw a need for even closer partnership among different actors to address the needs of persons displaced by disasters. Humanitarian assistance should be needs-driven rather than mandate-driven, and should focus on outcomes rather than processes. As a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, IOM worked in partnerships that included national and local agencies, the Governments of affected populations and non-traditional partners such as private companies. Achieving effective results required strong leadership and adherence by all parties to international humanitarian principles.

69. Humanitarian and development action must be linked in order to build the resilience of populations. Those involved should work together to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development and to enhance preparedness. Long-term development would help prevent emergency situations and limit the need for emergency relief in the future.

70. **Mr. Iyer** (UNICEF) said that the poorest and most vulnerable children were often the hardest hit by natural disasters or armed conflicts. The concept of resilience was useful in linking humanitarian assistance to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, social protection, conflict prevention and, ultimately, development efforts. Building resilience meant working with local stakeholders to identify ways of building the capacity to minimize risks, manage shocks and mitigate impacts. Social protection could enhance the resilience of national systems and local communities by maximizing the capacity of households to cope.

71. UNICEF supported the implementation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s transformative agenda, which would improve leadership, coordination and accountability in the response to emergencies. National leadership and ownership would also be required so that international mechanisms were used only when warranted by a gap in coordination. UNICEF would join with its partners to streamline operations and planning and would work with national authorities to identify capacity-building priorities. The engagement of Member States would be crucial to the success of the transformative agenda.

72. Accountability was a key component; agencies were improving their ability to track results, learn from mistakes and share their successes. In the previous year, UNICEF had refocused its country programmes around equity at the local and national levels in partnership with Governments, civil society organizations and United Nations entities. The Fund was building tools and systems that supported national structures in order to improve equity and results monitoring. Its programming strategy included capacity-building for Governments and civil society, because the agility, effectiveness and sustainability of crisis-response systems relied on national and local leadership and capacity. In Ethiopia in 2011, for example, a nutrition monitoring tool had been used to address the vulnerability of food-insecure communities.

73. **Ms. Kleffner** (UNHCR) said that the number of humanitarian crises displacing people had risen staggeringly in the previous decade. In 2011, UNHCR had served 35.4 million people. Post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire had caused some 900,000 people to seek asylum and hundreds of thousands of new refugees were fleeing the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Many arrived in poor condition and lived in host communities that already suffered from water shortages and food insecurity. She was concerned that insufficient funding might prevent UNHCR from meeting the basic needs of those refugees.

74. The Office and its partners were also addressing protracted situations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. Finding durable solutions was vital, but would require more resources. A key initiative in that regard was the Transitional Solutions Initiative launched with the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank to end dependency on humanitarian assistance by creating livelihoods for displaced persons and improving living conditions in host communities. The Initiative, currently being piloted in Colombia and eastern Sudan, would provide a platform through which United Nations development agencies and their partners could promote durable solutions.

75. UNHCR supported the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and had reviewed its leadership and coordination capacities and its emergency activation and response procedures accordingly. It had prioritized inter-agency

coordination and supported the field testing of the agenda that had begun in 2012. Engagement with United Nations partners, non-governmental organizations, Governments and others was indispensable in meeting the growing demands arising not only from the scale of responses required but also from the expectations of affected populations, the donor community and other stakeholders.

Draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2012/L.11)

76. **The President** invited the Council to turn its attention to draft resolution E/2012/L.11, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", submitted by himself on the basis of informal consultations. He expressed gratitude to Ms. Kathryn Yarlett of Australia and Mr. Andy Rachmianto of Indonesia, who had led the negotiations on the document, which he understood enjoyed consensus. He had been informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

77. *Draft resolution E/2012/L.11 was adopted.*

78. **Ms. Amos** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) expressed her appreciation to everyone who had participated in the humanitarian affairs segment, particularly the panellists, who had offered their unique perspectives and expertise, and the online audience, who for the first time had participated by submitting questions on Facebook and Twitter. One recurring theme of the segment had been the primary role of States affected by disasters in initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance; another had been the need to support local communities, who were first responders when disaster struck.

79. The main panel on evidence-based humanitarian decision-making had made it clear that open data, in addition to facilitating disaster preparedness and response, played a crucial role in development efforts and had huge benefits for the private sector. Kenya's Open Data Initiative was a good example of what was possible in that area.

80. The other main panel event had focused on partnerships, which could be of particular benefit since everyone, from individuals to major corporations and

academic institutions, could be involved in humanitarian work. Ways of broadening partnerships and making them more effective had been examined in side events on twinning arrangements and displacement during natural disasters. A side event to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group had highlighted that the adoption of global standards on search and rescue had been key to improvements in that area.

81. Discussions on the theme of resilience had stressed the need for disaster risk reduction, livelihood support and social safety nets that would reduce the costs of disasters in terms of human suffering and resources. The report on resilience and children in the Sahel prepared by Save the Children and World Vision had highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in the approach to the increasingly frequent droughts in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. One side event had outlined how Ethiopia's safety net, health and nutrition programmes had prevented tens of thousands of child deaths in 2011, while others had covered humanitarian principles, humanitarian access and civil-military coordination. Lastly, the Council had discussed emerging challenges: how to respond in urban contexts and how best to tap into the energy and potential of young refugees and displaced people, who could be important agents of change.

82. In addition to the thematic discussions, the Council had received three important updates: on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's efforts to improve field effectiveness; on the status of global humanitarian financing through the annual Global Humanitarian Assistance Report; and on the status of the consolidated humanitarian appeal at mid-year. Significantly, the 2012 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report had indicated that only 4 per cent of official humanitarian aid was invested in building resilience and reducing the risk of disaster, a fact that the international community should take into account in any discussion of integrating development and disaster response.

83. She commended the Member States on achieving consensus on the resolution just adopted, which reaffirmed the importance of access and humanitarian principles. It also highlighted that evidence played a crucial role in enhancing effectiveness, which would require the strengthening of local and national data collection capacities. The resolution encouraged the United Nations system and Member States to further

strengthen partnerships in support of national efforts, an area in which progress was already being achieved. It recognized the role of volunteers, the importance of building resilience and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's efforts to improve coordination, accountability and leadership.

84. **The President** thanked the Member States, United Nations agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent representatives, humanitarian organizations and representatives of the private sector for contributing to the 2012 humanitarian affairs segment. The two panels organized by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on evidence-based humanitarian decision-making and partnerships for humanitarian assistance had been especially informative, while the update on the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee had been very useful. A total of 16 side events — the largest number to date — had been held during the segment. He thanked the organizers and facilitators of those events for the interesting discussions they had inspired on crucial topics of humanitarian assistance.

85. In conclusion, he declared the humanitarian affairs segment closed.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.