



Council of the
European Union

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COHAFA 40
DEVGEN 107
ALIM 8
ONU 60
FAO 21
COAFR 152
MAMA 105
MOG 75
COEST 136
COASI 96
PROCIV 38
RELEX 451

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and
Food Aid on 3-4 March 2016

Delegations will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian
Aid and Food Aid held on 3 and 4 March 2016.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Humanitarian innovation supported by the Member States: Germany – Forecast-based financing (*incl. an informal exchange of views with the German Red Cross*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, the German Red Cross presented the German Federal Foreign Office's Action Plan for anticipatory response to weather-induced disasters, which is based on forecast-based financing (FBF). Looking at two case studies (Uganda, Peru) they explained how precautionary actions are triggered when weather forecasts exceed predefined multi-tiered thresholds. FBF is likely to save lives, and in the long run also resources, thanks to earlier and better response in the event of a catastrophe, by filling the gap between capacity building and emergency relief.

3. UNGA humanitarian resolutions

The Deputy Chair of the CONUN Working Party briefed on the process of preparing in CONUN a set of fiches to guide the EU's positions on various issues for UNGA 71, which is to be adopted by the Council in July. The Commission provided an overview of the Compendium of humanitarian resolutions adopted by UNGA 70.

4. Response to crises

a) Yemen

The Commission updated COHAFA on the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Yemen which, in terms of affected people, is by far the biggest crisis in absolute numbers, and informed about the new \$1.8 billion Humanitarian Response Plan. Further information was given on security and access issues, administrative impediments to humanitarian assistance, attacks on civilians as well as medical and humanitarian staff, and humanitarian advocacy efforts.

b) Food insecurity in southern Africa

The Commission provided an update on their humanitarian response in several food-insecure countries in southern Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland), where the effects of El Niño are expected to be felt until at least mid-2017. The UK delegation provided a readout of a recent visit of DFID officials to the region. The importance of adopting a regional approach and linking up with development programmes was highlighted during the discussion.

c) Early warning

The UK delegation announced they would soon be able to share information on research commissioned on a possible La Niña episode subsequent to El Niño.

5. World Humanitarian Summit

The Presidency provided further information on the set-up and preparatory process for the seven roundtables at the WHS, and delegations were invited to have an exchange of views on those roundtables. The group held a discussion on the purpose and possible key elements of draft Council Conclusions setting out the EU position for the WHS. The Commission informed about outreach to third countries underway ahead of the WHS.

6. Report by the HLP on Humanitarian Financing

The Presidency and the Commission debriefed delegations about the first Grand Bargain Sherpa meeting in Amsterdam on 29 February, where ten commitments to be made by donors and implementing partners were discussed. The Commission confirmed that the next meeting would be held in Brussels on 18 March.

7. Response to crises:

a) DRC (*incl. an informal exchange of views with the UN DSRSG/RC/HC for DRC*)

As part of an informal exchange of views Dr Mamadou Diallo, UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator to the Democratic Republic of Congo, briefed the group about this complex and protracted crisis affecting around 7 million people across all parts of the country. DRC is facing major challenges such as health problems exacerbated by a lack of access to sanitation and safe drinking water but also widespread food insecurity despite a wealth of arable land, partly due to the El Niño phenomenon impacts with heavy rains and floods. Insecurity and a lack of road infrastructure and logistics make humanitarian work difficult. Dr Diallo also focused on the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, which he said would be succeeded by a two-year Response plan designed to better link up humanitarian and development assistance, an issue whose importance was repeatedly emphasised during the exchange of views with Member States.

b) Area C

The Commission provided an update on trends and figures on demolitions of EU- and Member State-funded humanitarian structures in Area C, which had reached an unprecedented peak in January and February. The Chair of the MaMa Working Party provided political context to the discussion. Delegations expressed their concern at the demolitions trends and exchanged views on follow-up to the joint MaMa-COHAFA Operational Conclusions.

c) Syria

The Commission gave an update on the crisis in Syria, where the humanitarian situation remains fragile, notably in Aleppo and at the border with Turkey camps. Positive signs include better access in some parts of the country and an ease of administrative impediments, and the UN hopes to deliver more aid to besieged towns in the near future.

8. AOB

a) **Provision of humanitarian assistance within the EU**

The Commission presented the rationale of two documents it adopted on 2 March (Proposal for a Council Regulation on the provision of emergency support within the Union - ST 6768/16 - and Communication from the Commission to the Council accompanying the proposal for a Council Regulation on the provision of emergency support within the EU - ST 6784/16). The regulation, which the Presidency affirmed the Council would seek to adopt ahead of the European Council of 17-18 March, would set up a new permanent instrument allowing the EU to provide emergency support within its own boundaries similar to humanitarian action outside the EU funded under the Humanitarian Aid Regulation. It would be used in circumstances where one or several Member States require support in responding severe wide-ranging humanitarian consequences of an exceptional event. The Commission affirmed that this new permanent instrument would not be funded through the humanitarian budget, and that they would soon table a proposal for a 2016 Draft Amending Budget, to be agreed by the Council and the European Parliament.

b) **Informal teleconference on improving EDRIS**

The Belgian delegation updated on preparations of an informal teleconference they offer to hold with interested delegations and the Commission on suggested improvements to the EDRIS database.

c) **Debrief launch of the European Medical Corps (Brussels, 15 February)**

The Commission debriefed on this event.

d) **Debrief presentation of Netherlands Presidency priorities for COHAFA at the European Parliament's DEVE Committee (Brussels, 17 February)**

The Presidency debriefed on this event.

e) **Debrief Humanitarian NGO Roundtable Netherlands (The Hague, 18 February)**

The Presidency debriefed on this event.