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DEVGEN 285
ALIM 17
ONU 160
FAO 50
COAFR 320
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MOG 85
COEST 340
COASI 198
PROCIV 115
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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Outcome of proceedings of the meeting of the Working Party on
Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid on 9 November 2017

Delegations will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the meeting of the Working Party on
Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid held on 9 November 2017.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted (CM 4734/17 REV1). An AOB item was added on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, for which delegates of the MOG Working Party were invited to join COHAFA.

2. Humanitarian implications of the UN Development System reform / New Way of Working *(incl. an informal exchange of views with OCHA Policy Director Hansjoerg Strohmeyer)*

Mr Strohmeyer updated the group on relevant elements of the reform of the UN Development System and the New Way of Working. The definition of collective outcomes for both humanitarian and development actors and an enhanced role for the UN Resident Coordinator would be key. This would require an adaptation of the way donors work and provide their humanitarian funding, particularly in protracted crises, taking into account a multi-year perspective with different funding levels as required over different years.

3. Aid effectiveness and the use of (country-based) pooled funds *(incl. an informal exchange of views with CERF Secretariat Chief Lisa Doughten)*

Ms Doughten presented the operations and recent funding allocations of the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as well as the Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF). Both are funding tools for donors to provide un-earmarked humanitarian funding up-front, which the UN can disburse quickly in the event of sudden-onset humanitarian crises. Ms Doughten informed that the CERF's annual target volume was to be increased from USD 450m to USD 1bn. Delegations expressed their support for both instruments, stressing the funds' ability to respond to sudden-onset crises and provide much needed funding to 'forgotten' crises.

4. WFP Executive Board Second Annual Session (Rome, 13-17 November)

The group discussed revised draft statements to be made on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the WFP Executive Board. The draft statements were to be finalised by written procedure after the meeting.

5. Urban humanitarian crises (*incl. an informal exchange of views with IRC*)

As part of an informal exchange of views Helen Stawski, Head of Policy and Urban advisor with IRC, briefed the group on IRC preparedness measures and humanitarian response in urban contexts. She recalled that 88% of refugees live in low- and middle-income countries and 3 out of 4 live outside of camps, mostly in towns and cities. She stressed the need for humanitarian organisations and local authorities to coordinate and advocated for “area-based approaches” that involve all sectors and promote social cohesion, as they support both refugees and host communities. Crucially, they make full use of the existing urban infrastructure and organisational structure provided by local authorities.

6. Response to crises: Central African Republic

The Commission briefed about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in CAR. Considered a 'neglected' humanitarian crisis, violence had spread across most of country, with a 50% increase of the number of internally displaced people and half of the population dependent on outside assistance. A lack of access to people in need was the most pressing problem, caused by violence but also low acceptance of international organisations by the local population.

7. Lessons learned from the response to recent natural disasters (*incl. Hurricane Irma*)

The Commission gave a detailed account of the EU response to the damages and suffering caused by recent hurricanes Irma and Maria, which contributed to making 2017 the costliest hurricane season on record with an estimated damage of USD 300bn.

8. Debriefing on the COHAFA field mission to Ukraine (22-25 October)

The Presidency thanked delegations and EU institutions and services for their participation in and cooperation on this successful field mission. Delegations shared their conclusions from the mission.

9. AOB

a) Western Balkans

The Commission provided an update on the humanitarian situation of some 4,500 refugees and migrants stranded in Serbia and debriefed on the mission of Commissioner Stylianides to Serbia on 8-9 October.

b) Humanitarian Aid Committee / Emergency Aid

The Commission informed about the functioning of the ECHO operational reserve as well as the processes for preparing requests for additional funding to be made available from the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR), which need to be approved by the Council's Budget Committee. The Commission also provided further information on the Humanitarian Aid Committee meeting of 6 December.

c) New UK Humanitarian Reform Policy

The UK delegation briefed about their new Humanitarian Reform Policy, which contains five areas: i) protecting people in crises; ii) UK response to rapid onset disasters; iii) managing risk better; iv) long-term approaches to protracted crises; and v) improving the international humanitarian system.

d) Syria

The Commission briefed on the humanitarian situation in Syria, where an additional 1.7 million people had been displaced in recent months. Some 400,000 people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance remained hard to reach in rural Damascus.

e) Yemen (*MOG delegates were invited to join*)

The Commission debriefed on the humanitarian situation in the country following the total closure of access by air, sea and land by the Saudi-led coalition. The blockade meant that life-saving humanitarian goods could not be shipped to Yemen. The EEAS debriefed on diplomatic outreach.