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(OR. en)

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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 14-15 February 2019

Delegations will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid held on 14-15 February 2019.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted (CM 1517/19).

2. Draft Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors Special Report No 35/2018

The group held a first discussion on the draft text.

3. WFP Executive Board First Regular Session (Rome, 25 February - 1 March)

The group discussed the revised drafts of the three statements to be made on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the WFP Executive Board First Regular Session.

4. Triple Nexus - humanitarian perspective (incl. an informal exchange of views with Oxfam)

As part of an informal exchange of views, Emma Fanning, Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Adviser, gave an overview of different interpretations of the 'peace' component and the opportunities, risks and challenges related to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus from a humanitarian perspective.

5. Response to crises

a) Palestine¹ (incl. an informal exchange of views with Jamie McGoldrick, Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt - MaMa was invited to join COHAFA for this item)

The group held an informal exchange of views with the UN Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt on the humanitarian crisis in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

b) Yemen

The group discussed the humanitarian needs and international humanitarian response in Yemen based on situation updates by the EEAS and the Commission. It was highlighted that despite progress in implementing the Stockholm agreement, the main drivers of the humanitarian crisis needed to be addressed urgently to avoid large-scale famine. Delegations were also briefed about the High-Level Pledging Event organised in Geneva on 26 February 2019.

c) Sahel region (*incl. an informal exchange of views with Action Against Hunger*)

The group held an informal exchange of views with the Action Against Hunger (AAH) regional representative for Western Africa on key humanitarian challenges in the Sahel region, where 3.8 million people are expected to be at risk of malnutrition this year, despite a good lean season. The Commission complemented the briefing by AAH, stressing that the number of forcibly displaced people in the Sahel was expected to grow and that conflict had become the main driver of food insecurity in the region. The EEAS updated the group on relevant aspects of the EU Sahel Strategy.

6. European Solidarity Corps, humanitarian strand – information from the Presidency

The Presidency informed delegations about the state of play of discussions of the Commission proposal within the European Parliament.

7. State of the Humanitarian System (*incl. an informal exchange of views with Alnap*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, John Mitchell, Director of ALNAP, briefed COHAFA about the key findings from ALNAP's recent report on the State of the Humanitarian System. These include a widening gap between rapidly growing humanitarian needs and funding that increased at a slightly slower rate; a static humanitarian system supported largely by the same humanitarian donor countries; and an increasing quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance provided thanks mainly to changes such as increased cash-based assistance and more flexible and multi-year funding.

8. Comprehensive Evaluation of EU Humanitarian Aid

The Commission briefed COHAFA on their recent Staff Working Document on the evaluation of EU humanitarian aid during the period 2012-16. The findings of the evaluation will be implemented in the Commission's ongoing work in the months and years to come, notably with regard to continued improved coordination (including with Member States); reinforcing the multi-year perspective; more strategic partnerships; and a strengthened focus on resilience and sustainability.

9. AOB

- a) Third Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region (12-14 March)

The EEAS and the Commission briefed the group on the Foreign Ministers Conference (14 March) and the Days of dialogue (12-13 March) respectively.

- b) “Do No Digital Harm” event (Geneva, 6 February)

The Commission debriefed on this event, held in the context of the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, which brought together political, normative and technical experts in the field.

- c) Seminar on High-Impact, Low-Probability Events (Bucharest, 30-31 January 2019)

The Presidency debriefed COHAFA on the outcome of this workshop, which identified criteria to define low-probability risks with high impact, and set up a non-exhaustive list of the corresponding response capacities.

- d) Third meeting of Directors-General of Civil Protection of the Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean (Barcelona, 11-12 February 2019)

The Spanish delegation debriefed the group on this event, held nine years after the second such meeting.

- e) Presentation of the Presidency's humanitarian priorities at the European Parliament's Development Committee (Brussels, 22 January)

The Presidency debriefed the group on this exchange of views at which the Romanian Minister for Foreign Affairs presented the Presidency's humanitarian priorities set out in the COHAFA work programme.

f) Data protection issues related to COHAFA

Delegates discussed, in a personal capacity, data protection issues with regard to photos taken during informal exchanges of views with outside organisations.
