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COHAFA 113  
DEVGEN 302  
ALIM 19  
ONU 173  
FAO 52  
COAFR 336  
MAMA 217  
MOG 92  
COEST 364  
COASI 204  
PROCIV 119  
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#### OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid on 7 and 8 December 2017

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Delegations will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid held on 7-8 December 2017.

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### **1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted (CM 5211/17). AOB items were added on an experts meeting on forced displacement and on Iraq.

### **2. World Humanitarian Summit annual synthesis report (incl. informal exchange of views with OCHA Policy Branch Project Manager WHS follow-up & Agenda for Humanity, Kate Yarlett)**

As part of an informal exchange of views Ms Yarlett briefed COHAFA on the first WHS annual synthesis report (covering the period after the WHS until Dec 2016), which had been compiled by UN-OCHA based on self-reporting by stakeholders on their WHS commitments via the PACT online database. She gave an overview of achievements and remaining implementation challenges reported by UNMS, humanitarian agencies, NGOs and other WHS stakeholders in five Core Responsibility areas. Ms Yarlett also gave an outlook and provided technical explanations on the next self-reporting process covering 2017.

### **3. Forgotten crises**

The group held an orientation debate on the topic of "forgotten" humanitarian crises based on a background paper prepared by the Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese delegations. Possible ways to be explored for ensuring more coordinated response to forgotten crises include a systematic exchange of funding information, increasing the visibility of forgotten crises and emphasising the need to resolve underlying conflicts.

### **4. Humanitarian debates at the UNSC**

Six Member States currently (IT, SE, UK, FR) or as of next year (NL, PL) in the UNSC updated on humanitarian debates at the UNSC in 2017 and priorities for 2018. Key humanitarian issues in 2017 included country-specific debates on Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Myanmar and the Lake Chad region as well as thematic debates on issues related to respect for IHL and a lack of humanitarian access, the link between hunger and conflict, the humanitarian-development nexus, protracted humanitarian crises, protection of civilians in armed conflicts, protection of medical staff, and the protection of children in armed conflict. Priorities for 2018 include the renewal of Resolution 2165 on cross-border delivery in Syria; preventing and resolving conflicts and addressing the root causes of humanitarian and malnutrition crises; addressing at the highest level the crime of using starvation as a strategy of war; better peacekeeping, better use of intelligence and combatting asymmetric warfare; and fighting impunity and improving accountability in the event of IHL violations.

## **5. Cash-based assistance in humanitarian emergencies** *(incl. an informal exchange of views with the Danish Refugee Council / CaLP)*

As part of an informal exchange of views, Louisa Seferis, Global Technical Advisor, Cash & Markets with the Danish Refugee Council, gave COHAFA delegates a preview of findings of a forthcoming report by CaLP (Cash Learning Platform) on "The State of the World of Cash". Though cash-based assistance was now routinely being considered as a delivery modality, still only 8.5% of global humanitarian aid was being provided as cash. There had been progress with needs assessments and response planning, but in many contexts coordination of cash transfers on the ground remained a challenge. The Commission presented a recently published new version of their guidance to their humanitarian partners on the use of cash. The new model foresees splitting the process into three steps, using three different contractors for the overall humanitarian project cycle, the financial services required, and monitoring and evaluation.

## **6. Response to crises**

### a) Lake Chad region

The Commission reported that global awareness of this protracted humanitarian crises had increased since the Oslo donor conference. The Lake Chad region was witnessing one of the world's biggest displacement crises, with 2.6m forcibly displaced people in four countries. The Commission identified the following main challenges: ensuring humanitarian access to people in need; ensuring respect for humanitarian principles, notably independence; ensuring respect for safe and voluntary returns; 4) gathering more solid data on population flows (different UN organisations' mechanisms are not compatible); 5) advocacy towards governments to support the populations in need ; 6) sustaining interest and support by the international community, complementary to government efforts.

### b) Libya

This briefing highlighted the growing humanitarian needs among the Libyan population affected by the conflict. The Commission reported that some 20% of Libyans were in need of humanitarian assistance. Health and protection were major areas of humanitarian concern. Only 20% of health facilities were functioning as were only one-third of child clinics. Access to medicine was irregular. A new Humanitarian Response Plan was likely to ask for USD 295m.

## **7. Palestinian refugees in Syria** *(incl. an informal exchange of views with UNRWA)*

MaMa had been invited to join COHAFA for this item. As part of an informal exchange of views Mohamed Abdi Adar, UNRWA Field Director for Syria, briefed on the humanitarian situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria in the wider context of the political and military developments in the country. Seven years into the war, there were now 438,000 Palestinian refugees left in Syria, 95% of whom receiving UNRWA cash assistance. The majority was currently displaced, some multiple times. Key challenges for UNRWA operations included demining, repairing schools and, where entire neighbourhoods had been destroyed, removing the rubble so that basic services including clinics become accessible again.

## 8. Implementation of the Grand Bargain

The German delegation briefed COHAFA on progress in work-stream 9 on harmonisation and simplification of reporting requirements, which they are co-chairing under the Grand Bargain implementation process. The Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin had developed a simplified "8+3" reporting template with a set of eight fixed questions for each implementing partner plus an additional three more flexible questions that could be used to meet specific reporting requirements for various donors. The template was currently being tested in a two-year pilot phase rolled out in Myanmar, Iraq and Somalia. The Netherlands delegation briefed COHAFA on the progress in works stream 2 on transparency and Commission added the overview of GB facilitation group meetings.

## 9. Syria

The discussion was structured into a briefing by the Commission in four parts:

Humanitarian situation: The Commission briefed on the siege of Eastern Ghouta, where some 400,000 people, twice the number of those trapped at the time in Eastern Aleppo, have been largely cut off from any assistance for months. Severe malnutrition has increased five-fold in the past months and around 500 people are in urgent need of medical evacuation, which thus far has been denied.

Returns of refugees and IDPs: The Commission expressed its concern at an emerging narrative whereby a supposedly favourable condition exists for returns to Syria. Conditions were not yet ripe; returns would need to take place in a safe and dignified manner.

Renewal of UNSC Resolution 2165: The group discussed challenges regarding the renewal of UNSC Resolution 2165, which is due to expire on 10 January 2018.

2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP): The Commission informed about the process regarding the establishment of the 2018 HRP.

## 10. AOB

### a) Yemen

The Commission provided an update on the humanitarian situation, warning that continued obstacles to imports would severely increase the likelihood of famine in three to four months' time. It was crucial to allow commercial transports again.

### b) EU Aid Volunteers evaluation

The Commission briefed about findings from the draft mid-term evaluation report

### c) Update on the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) initiative

The Commission briefed about the results of the 2018 INFORM report, which is an open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters that can support decisions about prevention, preparedness and response.

- d) Debriefing WFP Executive Board Second Annual Session (Rome, 13-17 November) / Food Assistance Convention (London, 10 November)

The Commission briefed on the WFP EB session at which five statements had been made on behalf of the EU and its MS. The Commission also informed that the seminar in the margins of this year's Food Assistance Convention meeting had been on forgotten crises.

- e) Croatian National Strategy for Development Cooperation 2017-21, incl. Humanitarian Assistance

The Croatian delegation informed about their new national development and humanitarian aid strategy covering 2017 to 2021, which had been drafted in the spirit of the recent Communications and Council conclusions on the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and on Resilience.

- f) Priorities for COHAFA of the Bulgarian Presidency

The incoming Bulgarian Presidency informed that their priorities for COHAFA would include the humanitarian-development nexus, follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain, cash-based assistance, response to crises and forgotten crises, gender-based violence, education in emergencies, and food and nutrition assistance.

- g) Debriefing on the ad-hoc meeting with MS experts on forced displacement (Brussels, 22 November)

The Commission debriefed on this event, at which the rollout of the Lives in Dignity Communication was discussed with humanitarian and development experts from 10 Member States.

- h) Iraq

The Commission debriefed on a joint ECHO/DEVCO/EEAS mission to Iraq and Kuwait at Head of Unit level.

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