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COHAFA 57

NOTE

From: FI delegation
To: Delegations
Subject: Work programme of the Finnish Presidency for the Working Party on
Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) - July-December 2019

Delegations will find attached the work programme of the Finnish Presidency for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) for the period July-December 2019.

COHAFA work programme for the Finnish Presidency
of the Council of the European Union

The Finnish Presidency will continue to pursue the common priorities of the trio programme of Romania, Finland and Croatia. In the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), Finland will focus on the following topics: (i) respect for international humanitarian law; (ii) inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action; (iii) more effective humanitarian funding; (iv) gender; and (v) climate change and disaster risk reduction. In addition, Finland wishes to develop the work of COHAFA to increase its focus and added value, for instance through COHAFA common messages on thematic issues and current crises.

The Finnish Presidency would like to see humanitarian assistance included on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Council (Development). Additionally, the Presidency proposes to adopt Council conclusions on humanitarian issues with elements on international humanitarian law, humanitarian funding and groups in vulnerable situations.

International humanitarian law

International humanitarian law (IHL) is set to be particularly topical during the Finnish Presidency due to the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent taking place in December. The topic will be approached through discussions on the role of Member States and the EU as a whole in promoting respect of and compliance with IHL as well as the impact of the changing nature of humanitarian emergencies (e.g. protracted conflicts, urban environment, new technologies, proliferation of counter-terrorism and restrictive measures). In addition to discussions at working group level, Finland would welcome a strong message in Council conclusions and in the EU statement at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. IHL elements in Council conclusions will be prepared in cooperation with COJUR, with COHAFA taking the lead overall due to the humanitarian nature of the other elements in the Council conclusions.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action

Disability inclusion is an essential element in ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches the people most in need. Finland wishes to strengthen the principles of Leaving No One Behind and Reaching the Furthest Behind First by highlighting the most recent developments in the field of disability inclusion. Finland will promote the new normative basis, namely the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (to be adopted in the near future) and the corresponding EU Guidance Note on Disability Inclusion (launched in June). COHAFA is invited to identify ways for the EU and its Member States, as well as other humanitarian actors to promote and implement those guidelines in their humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian funding

In light of the EU's key role as a provider of humanitarian funding, the aim of the Presidency is to discuss developments and trends in both the volume and the structure of EU and Member State humanitarian funding and the impact on improved efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian actors. This includes different funding methods and channels e.g. multi-year funding, non-earmarked funding, country-based pooled funds (CBPF), and the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) as well as tools that aid organizations have to increase their efficiency. The Presidency will also highlight the importance of funding for early action and anticipatory financing, thus linking the topic to climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Gender in humanitarian action

Finland will highlight the importance of gender mainstreaming in the Member States' and the EU's humanitarian action. In addition, special focus will be given on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in humanitarian action and on combating and preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in emergencies.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

As one of the most pressing global issues, climate change will be mainstreamed in the Finnish Presidency programme and discussed from several different perspectives, most importantly that of Disaster Risk Reduction. COHAFA discussions will be linked to current policy discussions and on-going activities and events, , such as the UNSG Climate Summit, the implementation of the Sendai framework and anticipatory financing mechanisms.

Other topics to be covered

Sudden onset crises, as well as protracted crises and forgotten crises will be addressed first and foremost in the format of regional and thematic briefings in order to create a better overview of the EU priorities in planning and response, as well as those of its Member States.

Other topics to be covered in COHAFA include, among others, forced displacement, humanitarian-development -peace nexus, the role of school feeding in humanitarian response, the effects of counterterrorism and restrictive measures on humanitarian assistance. The working party will discuss and prepare EU statements to be made at the WFP Executive Board Second Regular Session, and exchanges views on discussions held in the governing bodies of other UN bodies (e.g. UNHCR Standing Committee, UNHCR Executive Committee, UNICEF Executive Board).

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – COHAFA JULY-DECEMBER 2019			AM	PM
COHAFA	3 July	Wednesday		X
	4 July	Thursday	X	X
Informal CODEV- COHAFA in Helsinki	15 July	Monday	X	X
	16 July	Tuesday	X	
COHAFA	5 September	Thursday	X	X
	6 September	Friday	X	
COHAFA	21 October	Monday		X
	22 October	Tuesday	X	X
COHAFA	7 November	Thursday	X	X
	8 November	Friday	X	
COHAFA	4 December	Wednesday	X	X
	5 December	Thursday	X	

INDICATIVE CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS

12 August	70 th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions
19 August	World Humanitarian Day
11-13 September	UNICEF Executive Board
17-19 September	UNHCR Standing Committee
23 September	UN Climate Action Summit 2019
24-27 September	UNGA High-Level Week
7-10 October	UNHCR Executive Committee
13 October	International Day for Disaster Reduction
18-22 November	WFP Executive Board Second Regular Session
20 November	30th Anniversary of the Conventions on the Rights of the Child
November	UNRWA Advisory Commission Regular Session
25 November (tbc)	Foreign Affairs Council (Development Ministers)
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
26-29 November	IOM Council Meeting
early December	Publication of the Global Humanitarian Overview
3 December	International Day for Persons with Disabilities
mid-December	UN General Assembly humanitarian debate
9-12 December	33 rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
17-18 December	1 st Global Refugee Forum

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