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COHAFA 81  
DEVGEN 170  
ALIM 11  
ONU 92  
FAO 37  
MAMA 143  
MOG 80  
COEST 199  
COASI 126  
PROCIV 74  
RELEX 839

#### 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 held on 5-6 September 2019

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Delegations will find in annex the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid held on 5-6 September 2019.

## 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in CM 3686/19 REV 1. AOB items were added on the European Solidarity Corps and on the International Conference on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Crisis Situations (Amsterdam, 7-8 October).

## 2. Humanitarian funding (*incl. an informal exchange of views with UN-OCHA*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, Lisa Carty, OCHA Director Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilisation, briefed the group on global humanitarian financing trends, which are characterised by a growing gap between the increasing needs and the funds provided. She presented the two types of humanitarian pooled funds managed by OCHA (the Central Emergency Response Fund, CERF, and the Country-Based Pooled Funds) and introduced OCHA's strategic initiatives in 2019: 1) promoting anticipatory action and greater crisis risk financing, 2) tackling four underfunded thematic priority areas, 3) exploring CERF multi-year funding in protracted crises, and 4) increasing funding to locally-led organisations. Member States stated that they welcomed and supported the possibility to fund life-saving rapid response through OCHA-managed pooled funds but stressed the need for visibility of individual donor contributions and their impact. A number of smaller donors among the Member States said they would welcome the opportunity to discuss with OCHA how to better contribute meaningfully to the pooled funds.

In closed format, the Commission provided an overview of the implementation of the EU humanitarian budget in 2019 and the methodology used to decide initial budget allocations. Member States were invited to share insights into their own humanitarian decision-making.

### **3. Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change** *(incl. an informal exchange of views with UNDRR)*

As part of an informal exchange of views, Kirsi Madi, Director of UNDRR, briefed the group on the key role that disaster risk reduction can play in the humanitarian agenda, and its contribution to reducing humanitarian needs. She outlined the move away from managing disaster to managing risk, and updated on progress made in implementing the seven priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Ms Madi touched upon the opportunities of linking DRR measures to the humanitarian-development nexus and briefed on the role of UNDRR as the DRR focal point within the UN system tasked with implementing the Sendai Framework.

In closed format, the Commission briefed on its disaster preparedness strategy, including its multi-hazard approach which takes into account not only natural disasters but also fragile and complex settings.

### **4. Ebola common messages**

Delegations provided initial comments on the draft messages, which are meant to provide humanitarian advocacy guidance for a more effective response to the Ebola outbreak in the DRC. Delegations were invited to submit further written comments by 11 September. A revised draft will be circulated for agreement by silence procedure.

### **5. Syria**

The EEAS briefed the group on the political and military context of the humanitarian crisis in Syria, with a focus on the latest developments around the region of Idlib. The Commission briefed the group on humanitarian needs, again with a focus on the plight of those trapped in Idlib and the 800,000 people internally displaced within the Idlib and Aleppo Governorates since the beginning of the year. With regard to the situation in the northeast of Syria, the Commission stressed the need for respecting the principles of non-refoulement and non-interference in humanitarian action.

## 6. COHAFA working methods

The delegates exchanged views on how to improve the group's working methods, on the basis of a Presidency summary of the discussion held at the informal COHAFA meeting in Helsinki in July. Delegations stated that background information and presentations by the speakers should be shared earlier to allow for consultations within Member State administrations. Discussions should be more strategic to enable Member States to coordinate on topics of relevance in the wider global humanitarian arena. The Presidency took note of the proposals made and said they would be incorporated in the paper. A revised version will be circulated for approval by the group.

## 7. Regional briefing: Sahel (*incl. an informal exchange of views with ICVA*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, Ignacio Packer, Executive Director of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), provided an overview of the multiple challenges in humanitarian response in the Sahel region. There is a need to treat not only symptoms but the root causes of hunger and malnutrition, which include environmental challenges, demographic developments, the consequences of climate change, and widespread insecurity. He advocated for a response comprising the following elements: improving humanitarian access; reverting the erosion of people's coping strategies, including by enabling more girls to attend school; reinforcing good governance, strengthening the rule of law and tackling corruption; making sure that security approaches don't impede on the protection of civilians; and scaling up humanitarian assistance while also pursuing a long-term strategy under the humanitarian-development nexus.

In closed format, the EEAS briefed on the security-related aspects of the crisis, referring to increasingly sophisticated attacks designed to stir inter-community violence, such as the recent attack on a military basis in Burkina Faso. The Commission provided detailed data on the various causes and drivers of the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel. Member States interventions focused on the implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus and on the protection of internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing violence in places such as Mali or Burkina Faso.

## 8. **Statelessness** (*incl. an informal exchange of views with UNHCR*)

As part of an informal exchange of views on the occasion of the High Level Segment on Statelessness to be held by UNHCR in Geneva on 7 October, Melanie Khanna, Chief of UNHCR's Statelessness Section, briefed the group on the organisation's efforts to eradicate statelessness. Ms Khanna pointed to numerous cases in which States' national laws are inconsistent with their commitments to international standards, and explained that statelessness was usually a result of the political will to exclude parts of the population, be they minorities or women. A lack of reliable global data made it difficult to know the exact number of stateless persons. Ms Khanna also presented the ten-year Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014-2024 and the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness. Finally, she pointed to EU achievements and to opportunities both within the EU and for EU external action to advance the goal of ending statelessness.

In closed format, the Commission briefed on the latest developments in response to the Rohingya crises; the Rohingya are among the most prominent stateless groups of people worldwide.

## 9. **AOB**

### a) Debriefing on Presidency intervention at EP DEVE Committee (Brussels, 24 July)

The Presidency informed delegations about the presentation by the Finnish Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Mr Ville SKINNARI, of the priorities of the Finnish Presidency in the area of humanitarian aid.

### b) Debriefing on informal meeting of CODEV-COHAFA-NDICI working parties in Helsinki, 15-16 July

The Presidency provided a brief summary of the issues discussed at the informal meeting.

### c) Briefing on the preparations of the United Nations General Assembly High Level week in New York, including the Secretary General's Climate Action Summit 23 September and Sustainable Development Goals Summit 24-25 September

The Commission and the EEAS provided an overview of humanitarian-related events during the UNGA ministerial week in New York.

d) Update on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan

The Commission informed that despite the peace negotiations (which at the time of the meeting had not yet failed) the humanitarian situation was as worrying as ever. Half of the Afghan population (17 million people) were living in conflict areas, 13.5m Afghans were severely food-insecure, 3.4m people were internally displaced, and a total of 10m Afghans had fled the country, mainly to Iran (4m) and Pakistan (3m). Afghanistan was home to the world's deadliest conflict (with 4,000 civilian casualties in 2018) and the world's 3rd-biggest food crisis. Additional humanitarian funding is needed to step up the response.

e) European Solidarity Corps

The Chair of the Youth Working Party informed COHAFA that the Youth Working Party would be in the lead of the trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament, and provided details about the envisaged timetable. COHAFA delegates are invited to attend the Youth WP meetings.

f) International Conference on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Crisis Situations  
(Amsterdam, 7-8 October)

The Dutch delegation recalled their invitation to this event and encouraged Member States to participate at ministerial level. The participation of Commissioner Stylianides, ICRC President Peter Maurer and UN USG Mark Lowcock has been confirmed. The goal of the conference is to show that psycho-social support is not a luxury but needs to be included in humanitarian responses by default.