

ECOSOC HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT 2011

**H.E. Ambassador Jan Grauls, Permanent Representative of
Belgium to the United Nations
Vice-President of ECOSOC**

Tuesday, 19 July 2011, 15.00

OPENING REMARKS

Excellencies,
Madame Under Secretary General,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this Humanitarian Affairs Segment of ECOSOC on “Working in partnership to strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance in a changing world”.

As always, the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC gives us the opportunity to have a frank and open discussion and deepen our understanding of the operational challenges for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Together we can identify ways forward to improve our collective response to the humanitarian disasters the world is facing today as well as envision the appropriate response for the challenges of tomorrow.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to commend the passion and the drive of the Emergency Relief Coordinator Madame Valerie Amos and the commitment of OCHA to advocate for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality,

impartiality and independence and to reach out and strengthen the humanitarian community worldwide. Humanitarian action and coordination of humanitarian assistance are a huge and complex undertaking. Every day, we are confronted with the humanitarian consequences of conflict and natural disasters. The humanitarian needs are plenty: food, shelter, health, protection. Some crises are much known to the public. Others pass under the radar of the mass media. Some emergencies have immediate causes. Others are slowly onset. For some, the scale and complexity of the humanitarian disaster are hard to oversee. Others look small. But they all have a human face in common. And we respond: as governments, donors, civil society, private sector and individuals. We all have the desire that all these efforts are effective and efficient. The United Nations are entrusted to lead and coordinate the international efforts to assist the affected populations and I am confident that our debates will contribute to enhance the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

I also want to pay tribute to the humanitarian workers. Attacks and threats to aid organizations, their personnel, equipment and facilities jeopardize the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian workers want to stay and deliver. Improved risk management and searching for new ways to address safety and security of humanitarian personnel, should allow to remain on the field, have access to the affected populations, assess their needs, and provide them with necessary humanitarian assistance.

Let's turn now to our programme of work. During the next two days, there will be two half-day panel discussions:

- One on **'Preparing for the future – predictable, effective, flexible and adequate humanitarian financing and its accountable use to meet the**

evolving needs and challenges for the delivery of humanitarian assistance,’ taking place tomorrow from 10:00 to 13:00 and

- One on **“Strengthening resilience, preparedness and capacities for humanitarian response’** to be held on Thursday, 21 July from 10:00 to 13:00.

I attach particular importance to these panels, as they address essential questions that will stay relevant for humanitarian action over the years to come.

Furthermore, we have a series of the interesting and pertinent side-events, organized and hosted by governments, NGOs and the United Nations. Three events have already taken place today:

- **Making Cooking SAFE: Addressing household energy needs in crisis Settings.**
- **The impact of global challenges and trends on humanitarian response with a special look at migration, urbanization and population growth**
- **Protecting education in emergencies.**

In the two days ahead, eight more side events will take place in the margins of the main panels and discussions:

- This evening, starting at 17.30, there is a cocktail reception in **commemoration of General Assembly resolution 46/182**, with key note addresses by Ms. Valerie Amos and Ms. Barbara Stocking of Oxfam. I will adjourn the Council plenary before 18.00 to permit delegations to attend.
- Tomorrow morning at 8.15 the event on **“Opportunities and Challenges in the Use of Military and Civilian Defense Assets (MCDA) to Support Humanitarian Response”** will run parallel to a **Research**

- Forum** where two reports will be launched – one on **global humanitarian assistance** and one on **sex and age disaggregated data**.
- On Wednesday from 13.15 to 14.15 the **Humanitarian Appeal 2011: Mid-Year Review** will take place, followed by a brief presentation on **protection in situations of natural disasters**.
 - In the evening, starting at 17.15 a high-level – and very timely discussion on **Food insecurity and the role of humanitarian organisations in addressing immediate needs and structural causes** will be held. The general debate will be adjourned in order to allow for your participation.
 - Finally, on Thursday we will have two more side-events. One at 8 am on: **“Making humanitarian action more effective: Calling for greater accountability for gender equality programming”**.
 - The last discussion will be from 13.15 to 14.45 on **“Enhancing the effectiveness and quality of international disaster assistance: international and regional initiatives to support affected States.”**

You may find the detailed programme as well as concept papers and flyers for the side events on the tables in this room.

This is a very dense schedule of work. I very much look forward to an informative, frank and productive exchange of views and count on your active participation to make this year’s ECOSOC humanitarian segment a success and build further trust in the work of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

I also would like to announce that, with the agreement of Madam Valerie Amos and the agreement of the President of ECOSOC, and in light of the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, it was decided to organize a special event

on the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa. This event will take place on Thursday, July 21st from 3 to 4 pm in this room.

Without further ado, let me give the floor to Ms. Valerie Amos, United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for her opening remarks.