

**Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and  
Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien**

*Remarks at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment side event presenting the  
Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017 and the Global Humanitarian Overview  
2017 Status Report*

*Geneva, 21 June 2017*

*As delivered*

May I first of all thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here and for giving such an endorsement of the importance of these reports.

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

Six months into 2017, we face a staggering 141 million vulnerable people who are struggling to survive in 37 countries tonight. Today's global, UN-coordinated inter-agency humanitarian appeal calls for a record US\$23.5 billion to meet the needs of 101 million of those people who depend on our support. This means that since the beginning of the year, 12.5 million more lives have been pushed over the cliff's edge, or across the knife's edge, whichever analogy you prefer, but for them, it's simply real; so humanitarian funding requirements have increased by \$1.3 billion over that period.

So far in 2017, donors have generously provided - and I do thank you - \$6.2 billion dollars in funding. This is the highest amount the UN-coordinated appeals have ever received at mid-year. Globally, the robust donor support has enabled the UN and its partners to save and protect countless lives - women, children and men - around the world. For example, humanitarian partners have reached 5.8 million people in Yemen. In north-east Nigeria this year, over 2.3 million people have received emergency food and livelihoods support, and over 750,000 people have been reached with water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. More than 807,000 people in Haiti have been vaccinated against cholera, and over 320,000 people in Myanmar have gained access to safe drinking water. Nearly 132,000 primary school-aged children in Cameroon, Chad and Niger have been enrolled to learn. This is just a tiny sample of the amazing work we can achieve together. And I do put big emphasis on that working together: this is a testament and a proof of the impact that working through the multilateral system does have, when that funding, humanitarian leadership, the plans that can be invested behind, and the access are in place.

However, despite the generosity and successes on the ground, the gap between resources and needs continue to rise. This is mainly due to protracted, violent crises and recurrent

natural disasters which trap millions of people in perpetual cycles of crisis. The erosion of respect for international humanitarian law by many parties to conflict also escalates humanitarian needs: people are wounded and maimed; they flee, their livelihoods and basic public services are destroyed. Thus, aid organizations are asked to do ever more, to resort to ever more dangerous missions and to use more expensive means of delivering aid. And as I said earlier in another meeting: they are not a target. They need protecting as well.

A new approach is required to reduce humanitarian needs. Protracted crises can no longer be managed with a year-to-year approach. Our New Way of Working brings humanitarian and development actors together to reduce needs and address vulnerabilities and risks through collective outcomes. Multi-year planning supported by multi-year funding is becoming a new norm for crises such as those in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti and Somalia. Of the twenty-five current Humanitarian Response Plans, seven stretch over two years or more, thus bringing greater consistency and longer-term planning to meeting and reducing needs.

But humanitarian work will not stem the escalating needs. Political will, political courage, leadership and solutions are needed to address the protracted nature of crises and lack of political solutions. All parties to conflicts and those with influence over them have a duty to ensure that international humanitarian law is respected.

The message of this GHO Status Report is clear: needs requiring an urgent response are rising faster than funding is coming in. We are utterly reliant on donors continuing to give generously.

To date, only a quarter of the funding required to respond to this year's emergencies has been received. I ask everyone to urgently contribute additional funding, and we appeal to parliaments to consider special supplementary humanitarian aid budgets as some indeed already have done. We have six months in which to raise \$17.3 billion to fully cover the needs of the most vulnerable of our fellow children, women and men. That is already a prioritised number, it is not a negotiated number, it is the number that is needed to reach those people.

So let me close by thanking all donors for their generous funding and commitment to life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. Thanks especially to those who provide flexible, unearmarked funding in support of the humanitarian response plans as the most effective, the most principled and value-for-money investment to save lives. I urge donors who have pledged funding to disburse their outstanding pledges as soon as possible. By that I mean cash. Cash buys programmes, programmes save lives. And please remember to report your contributions to the global Financial Tracking Service, it really matters, so that we all have good real-time information for decision-making, and the predictability that we need to really meet these vast, eye-watering, escalating needs and deliver the ultimate international public good of which we can all play a part. Thank you.

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