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OPENING REMARKS

BY

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DURING THE 2022 ECOSOC HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT

**21 JUNE 2022
10:00 – 13:00 HOURS**

**ECOSOC CHAMBER
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

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- **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am honoured to join Vice President H.E. Ambassador Diego Pary Rodríguez of Bolivia today at the **Opening Session of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment.**
2. The issues confronting the international community are profound. As I indicated yesterday during the ECOSOC Meeting on Transition from Relief to Development, the rise in food insecurity, hunger and famine is deeply worrisome.
3. Also troubling are the unprecedented displacement numbers globally.
4. Yet, the issues facing the humanitarian community do not stop there.
5. The world's most vulnerable, particularly in humanitarian crises, are still suffering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected and endure setbacks, particularly gender-based violence, lack of access to education and opportunities to thrive.
7. We are experiencing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, and disregard of international humanitarian law remains a significant concern.
8. Constraints to humanitarian access continue to prevent affected people from receiving life-saving assistance. Too often humanitarian personnel are harassed, threatened and even killed.
9. On top of all this, the climate crisis is exacerbating risks and compounding vulnerabilities, putting lives in danger, threatening livelihoods and driving displacement.
10. The drought in the Horn of Africa alone is causing enormous suffering. As OCHA, FAO, WFP and other humanitarian organizations have emphasized, the situation is dire and urgent action is required.

11. More than **18.4 million people** in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are facing severe food insecurity.
12. In Somalia, the risk of famine is growing, where more than **200,000 people** are facing catastrophic hunger. More than **one million people** have been forced to leave their homes to look for food, water and pasture and many families have been separated.
13. Millions cannot access enough clean water to drink or for cleaning. Families also face heightened risks of disease. The impacts on women and children are disproportionately felt as they suffer poor nutrition, loss of livelihoods and increased risks.
14. I, therefore, appeal to the international community to provide humanitarian assistance and stand in solidarity with those affected by humanitarian emergencies, particularly those in the Horn of Africa and across the globe.
15. I am pleased that this meeting is focusing on these urgent issues and look forward to discussing over the

next few days how humanitarian actors are responding to such challenges and how to strengthen the delivery of humanitarian aid in the face of many large-scale challenges, such as conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

16. We need to draw lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to adapt our work and prepare better for future crises.
17. We need to promote accountability and strengthen respect for international humanitarian law.
18. We need to preserve the humanitarian space and work to ensure that people in situations of vulnerability receive the assistance they need.
19. We need better understanding of the humanitarian impacts of climate change and prepare for the ever-growing threats that the crisis will bring.
20. This spirit of cooperation is much needed to overcome the massive challenges ahead of us.

21. I am gratified that the Humanitarian Affairs Segment offers a timely opportunity for rich, solutions-focused conversations to shape humanitarian work and have a real impact on the lives of those in need.
22. In this respect, I urge you to use this Segment and ECOSOC platforms to learn lessons which can support humanitarian action and promote innovation to maximize effectiveness and impact of humanitarian action for affected communities.
23. Above all, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment advocates for solutions which alleviate humanitarian needs and suffering.
24. I conclude by thanking our humanitarian personnel and partners for demonstrating dedication, determination, and compassion for the vulnerable despite working in challenging environments. Through your hard work and resilience, you made a difference to the livelihoods of many people in humanitarian settings.

I thank you for your kind attention.