



**DRAFT PROGRAMME**  
**for the 2024 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment**  
**25 to 27 June 2024, New York City**

*Updated as of 14 June 2024*

**Overarching HAS theme: *Putting humanity first in the face of conflicts and climate change: strengthening humanitarian assistance and respect for international humanitarian law, and promoting effectiveness, innovation and partnerships***

**Tuesday, 25 June 2024**

**10:00-10:30: HAS Opening session: *Putting humanity first in the face of conflicts and climate change***

**Opening Remarks of the Chair: H.E. Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations in New York & Vice-President of ECOSOC responsible for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment.**

**Keynote Statements:**

1. Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General
2. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly (PGA)
3. Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA
4. Local/National NGO

**10:30-13:00: High-level Panel: *The 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions: reversing the erosion of respect for international humanitarian law and its humanitarian consequences***

In the past decade, the world has seen a pronounced erosion of respect for international humanitarian law (IHL). Civilians are paying the price as hostilities are increasingly affecting civilian infrastructure, medical facilities, humanitarian and medical personnel, and increasingly brutal tactics have come to characterize today's conflicts, with women and girls continuing to be disproportionately impacted. This panel will notably explore the increasing pressure on

humanitarians and humanitarian principles amid these violations, and what can be done to foster a culture of compliance with IHL and reverse these trends 75 years following the adoption of the Geneva Conventions.

The panel will also discuss the importance of full and unimpeded humanitarian access to affected populations, including for the movement of humanitarian personnel and goods, the distribution of relief commodities, and the provision of health care and other life-saving services. In particular, the panel will explore the important role that States and other parties have in upholding and respecting IHL by allowing and facilitating unhindered, safe, and rapid access, while minimizing negative humanitarian consequences and ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian and medical personnel.

### Guiding Questions

- *We see today that hostilities are provoking major consequences for civilian populations. What are the concrete impacts of lack of respect of international humanitarian law on civilians— on their safety, access to healthcare, to food, to humanitarian assistance, etc. - and the consequences in terms of respect for IHL?*
- *IHL is under pressure. We have seen recent attempts to minimize IHL, adopt permissive or flexible interpretation or remove it altogether. What are the opportunities that States and other stakeholders must seize to safeguard and reaffirm the centrality of IHL in governing the conduct of hostilities?*
- *Many have become numb to civilians' suffering and IHL violations. How can the international community reinstate a sense of urgency?*
- *What are some good practices that parties have carried out to ensure they comply with IHL?*
- *What are some effective forms of influence and leverage that States have exercised to ensure parties' respect for IHL?*
- *Why is ensuring accountability and justice so important to strengthen PoC? What are some effective forms of cooperation that States should exercise to pursue the investigation and prosecution of international crimes?*
- *How can States help to uphold IHL with specific attention to conflict-related sexual violence to ensure the prevention and mitigation of such crimes, as well as strengthened accountability?*
- *What is the place and importance of IHL in a rules-based order, as called for by the Secretary General in his New Agenda for Peace?*

Chair and Moderator: H.E. Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations in New York

Speakers:

1. Ms. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian, and Social Development, African Union (AU)
2. Mr. Franz Perrez, Head of the Directorate of International Law at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Government of Switzerland
3. Mr. Volker Türk, High Commissioner, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
4. Ms. Eva Svoboda, Head of Policy, Research and Humanitarian Diplomacy, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
5. Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director, Operations and Advocacy Division, OCHA
6. Ms. Meinie Nicolai, General Director, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-Belgium
7. Ms. Nelly Mbangi, Coordinator, Sauti Ya Mama Mukongomani (SMM)

**13:15-14:30: Side Event: *The Urgent Need to Address Famine Risks and Acute Food Insecurity: how can we rapidly avert and prevent current and future food crises?***

**3:00-6:00: General Debate**

---

**Wednesday, 26 June 2024**

**10:00am -13:00: High-level Panel: *Addressing the adverse impacts of climate change in humanitarian emergencies***

The 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) was a watershed moment for the humanitarian community, affirming that the humanitarian community must work even harder to help people most vulnerable to the climate crisis. This panel will explore how humanitarians are building on momentum following COP28 to reduce and address humanitarian needs more effectively and efficiently, including through anticipatory approaches, early warning early action systems and disaster risk reduction and related financing. The panel will further explore the current disaster landscape and climate-related challenges, including the specific challenges facing women and girls, and discuss key actions and investments that are required to better anticipate, prepare for and respond to the humanitarian impacts of the adverse effects of climate change in support of affected and vulnerable communities and countries. This will include a focus on tackling rising food insecurity and displacement due to climate impacts, and the increasing intersection between climate, food insecurity, displacement and conflict. Given the scale of the challenge posed by climate change, the discussion will also identify opportunities and ways for humanitarian actors to continue strengthening partnerships and initiatives with development, climate and disaster risk reduction actors and with regional organizations, national authorities and local communities in managing disaster and climate risks and responding to their impacts and in strengthening resilience to increasingly frequent and devastating climate shocks.

## Guiding Questions

- *How is climate change transforming the humanitarian landscape in the immediate and longer term for communities on the frontlines of climate change and climate-related disasters? How are climate-related disasters and the adverse effects of climate change fueling food insecurity and displacement?*
- *What are required solutions? How is the humanitarian community adapting and responding? What priority actions are required for the humanitarian system to further effectively adapt, prepare for, and respond in the immediate and longer term? What are key gap areas that require increased system-wide attention?*
- *How should international support reinforce and complement the efforts of countries and communities affected by disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, in particular Small Island Developing States facing existential threats and countries experiencing recurring disasters or protracted humanitarian emergencies? What is the priority needs of vulnerable and affected countries and communities?*
- *How can the humanitarian system achieve the required capacity and readiness at the global, regional, national and local levels? What opportunities and best practices are there to enhance collaboration with regional organizations?*
- *How can we scale up support for the implementation of the key outcomes and initiatives launched at COP27 and COP28? How can humanitarian organizations best contribute to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage in the wider context of climate action? What are some of the key opportunities ahead for COP29 and COP30?*

Moderator: Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director, Operations and Advocacy Division, OCHA / Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director, Financing and Partnerships Division, OCHA

## Speakers:

1. Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh
2. TBC, G20 Representative from Brazil
3. Ms. Nena Stoiljkovic, Under Secretary General for Global Relations, Humanitarian Diplomacy and Digitalization, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
4. Ms. Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)
5. Ms. Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
6. Ms. Paola Albrito, Director, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
7. Mr. Pär Liljert, Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office at the United Nations
8. Ms. Abby Maxman, President and CEO, Oxfam America
9. Ms. Jennifer Sara, Global Director for Climate Change Global Practice, World Bank

10. Ms. Emeline Siale Ilolahia, Executive Director, Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO)

**13:15-14:30: Side Event: *Underfunding and the Cost of Inaction: How to address one of the main challenges to humanitarian response***

**15:00-18:00: High-level Panel: *Embracing innovation and adapting new technology in humanitarian assistance***

Humanitarian actors are increasingly finding themselves at the intersection of technology and humanitarian assistance, left to consider the intricate balance between the risks and benefits of integrating innovative technology into humanitarian work. The humanitarian sector must explore the transformative possibilities of emerging technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), while simultaneously ensuring that new tools are used ethically and responsibly to ensure greater accuracy and dignity for people in need. New technologies have the potential to enhance humanitarian action by improving efficiency and accuracy in data analysis, forecasting, and decision-making; however, proactive risk management strategies and safeguards are crucial to protect humanitarian principles, provide data security, and ensure tools do not exacerbate preexisting inequalities. Pulling from insights laid out in the recent OCHA Briefing Note on AI and the Humanitarian Sector and the Policy Brief on UN 2.0, this panel will discuss the ethical complexities, strategic advantages, and practical implications of embracing innovation in humanitarian efforts. This panel will also explore the extent to which the humanitarian sector has a clear understanding of the problems that new technologies can solve; and how to ensure innovative solutions are correctly adapted – technologically, financially, and politically – to local contexts.

Guiding Questions:

- *How is new technology, including AI, being used by humanitarian organizations to increase the effectiveness and impact of humanitarian work? In what ways can the United Nations, private sector and academia engage to foster innovation and maximize the impact of innovative technologies on humanitarian efforts? How can these partnerships be leveraged to develop sustainable solutions that uphold humanitarian principles?*
- *How can the humanitarian sector effectively address ethical and legal considerations to ensure that the integration of AI and other new technologies in humanitarian work remains principled and accountable to affected people, including those most marginalized?*
- *What concrete measures can be devised to address data challenges, such as safeguarding against biases, including gender biases, and ensuring data quality, to mitigate the potential risks associated with AI and other emerging technologies in humanitarian contexts, including risks to the perception of humanitarian organizations' neutrality and independence?*

- *How can we foster greater transparency and accountability in the development and deployment of technological solutions for humanitarian action, particularly regarding decision-making processes and algorithmic outcomes? How can we effectively harness the power of AI and new technology to prevent discrimination and misinformation, including against women and girls and amplifies their voices, rights and opportunities?*

Moderator: Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Director, Coordination Division, OCHA

Speakers:

1. Mr. Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
2. Ms. Rania Dagash, Assistant Executive Director for Partnerships and Innovation, UN World Food Programme (WFP)
3. TBC, World Health Organization (WHO)
4. Mr. Christopher B. Harland, Deputy Permanent Observer and Head of Humanitarian Affairs of the ICRC Delegation to the United Nations
5. Ms. Gina Neff, Executive Director and Professor of University of Cambridge, Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy
6. Ms. Kasia Mohammed, Global Product Partnerships Manager for Social Impact, Google
7. Ms. Lauren Woodman, CEO, DataKind

---

**Thursday, 27 June 2024**

**10:00-13:00: High-level Panel: *Transformative humanitarian action: women and girls at the centre of prevention, response and protection***

For decades, women and girls have suffered disproportionately from the effects of conflict and natural disasters. More recently, however, humanitarian organizations have included women in decision-making and directly in aid efforts, with promising results. The panel will discuss best practices and provide policy recommendations likely to yield better results for women, by women, including greater impact across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. This will highlight most impactful best practice and needs and priorities of women and girls in humanitarian crisis, shed light on the contributions made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no-one behind, as well as advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda and reinforcing inclusive multilateral solutions as we head into the Summit of the Future.

Guiding Questions

- *Laws, policies and plans exist, but inconsistencies remain with implementation, as shown in the recently launched UN Gender Review and Gender Equality Acceleration Plan. How can we institutionalize commitments on gender equality and women's participation, and*

*strengthen accountability and leadership on the delivery of these commitments in humanitarian contexts?*

- *How can we ensure the inclusion and leadership of crisis-affected women in humanitarian contexts, and that women's experiences are at the center of humanitarian response, protection and prevention? What is needed to help shift power structures that exclude or marginalize women and girls in humanitarian settings?*
- *How can the international community, donors, and other partners better support and amplify the leadership of women and girls in crisis, as well as that of local women's organizations?*
- *How can we expand and increase funding to local women's organisations, often the first responders on women's protection, including responding to and preventing gender-based violence, and funding for gender equality programming more broadly?*

**Chair and Moderator:** H.E. Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations in New York

**Speakers:**

1. Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director, UN Women
2. H.E. Ambassador Lisa Carty, Representative of the United States of America to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
3. Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant-Secretary-General and Deputy ERC, OCHA / Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director, Financing and Partnerships Division, OCHA
4. Mr. Andrew Saberton, Deputy Executive Director, UN Population Fund (UNFPA)
5. Mr. Ted Chaiban, Deputy Executive Director, Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
6. Ms. Sofia Sprechmann, Secretary General, CARE International
7. Ms. Negin Yari, Chair, Women's Advisory Group to the Humanitarian Country Team in Afghanistan
8. Ms. Hala Al-Karib, Regional Director Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network

**13:15-14:30: Side Event: *Universally applied and locally rooted – a recipe for IHL effectiveness?***

**15:00-18:00: HAS Closing Session and Adoption of the HAS Resolution**

- Continuation of general statements and adoption of the HAS resolution
- Closing Remarks of the Chair, H.E. Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations in New York & Vice-President of ECOSOC responsible for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment.
- Closing remarks of Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA

**Friday, 28 June 2024**

**10:00-11:15: Side Event: *Youth and Education in Emergencies***

**11:30-12:45: Side Event: *Investing in Humanity: UN Pooled Funds***

**13:15-14:30: Side Event: *Shaping Futures: Women's Impact in Humanitarian Transformations***

**15:00-16:15: Side Event: *Emergency Call for Action for Children in Gaza and the West Bank***

DRAFT