

## **74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

### **Agenda item: 71**

#### **Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance**

#### **JOINT STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF INDIA AND SWEDEN**

**Delivered by Ambassador Anna-Karin Enestrom  
Permanent Representative, Swedish Mission to the UN**

Mr. President, it now also my great honour to deliver a Joint Statement on behalf of India and my own country Sweden on the strengthening the United Nations system to respond to the complex and diverse humanitarian emergencies of our time.

The humanitarian needs in the world today are greater than ever. We are deeply concerned that humanitarian emergencies – primarily driven by natural disasters and armed conflicts – reached a new high this year, with 148.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian funding requirements for 2020 are set at 26.5 billion USD, the highest in history.

The numbers of displaced persons due to humanitarian emergencies are increasing and remains an area of shared concern. The humanitarian crises are today more complex and protracted, and place higher demands on the international community. Greater coordination and complementarity in action among various humanitarian actors is crucial.

We – India and Sweden – reaffirm that humanitarian principles and international law provide the basis for humanitarian assistance. We are committed to preserving and strengthening respect for, and adherence to, the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Repeated violations of international humanitarian law remain one of the most serious challenges. Parties to armed conflicts, including non-state actors, continue to flout international humanitarian law and perpetrate abuses of human rights with impunity. In today's armed conflicts we continue to witness lack of humanitarian access to persons in need, an increase in attacks and threats directed at civilians in armed conflict, as well as at medical care. The primary responsibility of providing protection and humanitarian assistance in a crisis always lies with the affected state. In addressing the specific needs of the affected people, international humanitarian assistance must be provided impartially, in accordance with the guiding principles in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

The UN agencies and other partners continue to respond to complex emergencies in a commendable manner. The need for enhanced complementarity between humanitarian action and development cooperation is well recognized, especially in the context of today's multi-dimensional crisis situations.

Under financing of humanitarian appeals remains a challenge. We call upon Member States to consider increasing their contribution to UN humanitarian assistance system, including the CERF and the country based pooled funds. We would like to stress the value added in non-earmarked flexible funding and predictable support to our humanitarian partners.

Access for and protection of humanitarian workers, especially in situations of armed conflict, remain a concern. Attacks on humanitarian personnel are not only attacks on the United Nations, but also on humanity. We welcome the resolution on “Safety and Security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”, which we will adopt in this chamber later today.

There must be no doubt that there is zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN system and elsewhere. Persons responsible of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation must be held accountable. Victims of these abuses as well as those who report such abuses must be afforded adequate protection. We appreciate the Secretary-General’s deep commitment and look forward to concrete steps to tackle this important issue.

Sweden has long been one of the largest donors of core funding to the UN humanitarian actors. Sweden’s overall humanitarian budget has also consistently increased in past five years, in line with growing global humanitarian needs.

Sweden remains committed to the *Grand Bargain*. In line with our *Grand Bargain* commitments, Sweden will provide WFP, UNRWA, UNHCR and CERF with multi-year core funding for the period of 2018-2021. The *Grand Bargain*’s concrete targets provide a vehicle for effectiveness and efficiency reform of the humanitarian system as well as enhanced inclusiveness. Flexible humanitarian funding continues to be a top priority for Sweden as we strongly believe that flexible funding, such as core and pooled funding, allows for timely, independent, effective and efficient humanitarian action.

India supports fellow developing countries through assistance and relief efforts in humanitarian emergencies including natural disasters. These efforts have ranged from immediate supply of relief materials to emergency evacuation of very large numbers of persons of various nationalities from affected zones.

The Indian Navy was the first responder in the evolving humanitarian crises in the aftermath of Cyclone IDAI that hit Mozambique on 15 March 2019. India has also provided emergency relief material including food supplies and medicines to three countries affected by cyclone IDAI in southern Africa and to the people of Bahamas who were affected by Hurricane Dorian.

Going forward we need to look beyond immediate relief and rehabilitation. A disaster resilient world demands disaster resilient infrastructure. India remains committed to address the challenges of complex humanitarian emergencies through building disaster resilient infrastructure. In this context, India has taken the initiative to launch

the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure in partnership with several other countries, during the 2019 Climate Action Summit.

We – India and Sweden – today call upon all member states to engage and do their part to ensure that the unprecedented needs and challenges of today are met with unparalleled solidarity and a robust humanitarian response.

Thank you.