

**SPEAKERS AT FIRST CONFERENCE FOR HOSTING COUNTRIES
OF WORLD'S HUMANITARIAN HUBS- COP 28**

Time and Location:

Sunday, 3 December 2023, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Expo City, COP28, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

1- Opening remarks by HE Reem Al Hashimy,

UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation

“It is quite an honor to join you, marking the very first conference for hosting countries for the world’s humanitarian hubs on the margins of COP28 here in Dubai. A critical gathering of minds that requires now more than ever collaborative efforts and global solidarity in every aspect of humanitarian action. 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the International Humanitarian City of Dubai, and we hold the decision to embark on our humanitarian venture with such immense pride. I hope to take this opportunity to thank the IHC community for their invaluable time, work, and dedication to the cause over the course of the last 20 years. This first conference for hosting countries for the world’s humanitarian hubs, promoted by the IHC of Dubai in collaboration with the UAE’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responds to the imminent call for a newfound form of collaboration within the realms of humanitarian action. This humanitarian action enables us to move towards an evolved, agile, and comprehensive emergency response mechanism. Numerous humanitarian hubs exist all around the world, but what differentiates the 11 hosting countries here is that we share common ground. We host stocks from various international partners and act as preparedness and response mechanisms for the entire international humanitarian community.

This common denominator is indicative of a collaborative approach that is hardwired into our DNA. This next step is almost natural to us. Creating a network of humanitarian cities and hubs to facilitate

information sharing through digital platforms at a large scale. The Humanitarian Logistics Databank, which has already taken its first steps within its implementation in Italy, Panama, and the UAE, provides for crisis-affected countries and their respective relief coordinators a necessary information on what humanitarian aid is available and in which locations, enabling swift and immediate responses from the closest hubs and operating with more cost-efficient sustainable operations. It is now, however, time for us to actually expand our reach.

So, this first conference, which is taking place here, features, for the first time, the Relief, Recovery and Peace Day, marking the first official discussion of peace and conflict at any COP, a pivotal moment in the global climate discourse. It is a fact that climate change has led to such a surge in extreme weather events, intensifying the number and level of humanitarian emergencies and demanding an evolution of the way we all prepare and respond to crises.

This shift necessitates timely adjustments within the humanitarian community, demanding collective efforts from international organizations, governments, and leaders across different sectors. This endeavour is not possible without the inclusion of a network, and not just any network: a network of humanitarian hubs and cities that we are here to establish.

Today represents an important step in the right direction. Joining forces and working as that network will result in a more cohesive and effective preparedness as well as an integrated, unified response to emergencies. And working together, we can do so much more than working alone. Once more, I'd like to reiterate the importance of these efforts, not being one-sided to ensure we are approaching new challenges from every direction we need to. There is also an immediate need to establish a sustainable supply chain, cutting carbon emissions, and respecting the planet, while delivering timely and efficient aid to affected populations.

Today is the first step in that direction. I'm proud to be amongst you this morning, and I trust that this moment will define the future of humanitarian response."

Thank you.

2- Joyce Msuya,
Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator,

Your Excellency Minister Al Hashimy, dear friend of the United Nations, excellencies, colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen. It is an honour for me to be here at the launch of this First Conference for the Hosting Countries of the World Humanitarian Hubs. I want to thank H E Minister Al Hashimy and the government of the UAE for hosting this important meeting today, for their steadfast support to OCCHA, and for doing so much to spearhead sustainable efficient and effective humanitarian operations.

It is a particular honour to be addressing you on this issue in a year in which Dubai International Humanitarian City celebrates its 20th anniversary. Over those two decades of operations, the IHC has not only played an integral (role)in disaster preparedness and crisis response, it has also become a critical lockers of collaboration and partnership on humanitarian issues between the UN humanitarian organizations, academia and private sector. I want to express my thanks to the IHC for everything it has done to support humanitarian action over time.

It is also a distinct pleasure to be here among representatives of the host countries of other world humanitarian hubs which play an equally important role both individually and as part of a network of humanitarian of humanitarian logistical centers globally.

Excellencies, the role of the hubs that you host is critical. When disaster strikes, speed is of the essence. Every hour of every day counts when it comes to getting life-saving aid where it needs to go.

The strategic location of world humanitarian hubs and their access to well-connected transport routes is what allows us to be prepared and to respond quickly, efficiently, and effectively.

When extreme flooding hit Pakistan from June to October 2022 leaving one third of the country under water and affecting an estimated 33 million people, over and a hundred and thirty metric tons of aid from the hubs was able to be rapidly deployed by sea and air to support humanitarian partners taking part in the government – led response. When devastating earthquakes hit Turkey and Syria at the start of this year, UN agencies were able to rapidly send urgent supplies from the Dubai Hub. Hundreds of metric tones of safe drinking water, sanitation services, trauma and emergency surgery supplies were dispatched over the course of the first weeks and month of crisis. These are just two examples of many countless other examples. But the effectiveness of the world humanitarian hubs has not stopped at quick onset crises. They have proven equally important in supporting responses to protracted crises all over the world. They have been central to reliably and sustainably channeling the vast quantities of supplies needed to sustain people facing long term crises brought on by draught, flood conflict and displacement.

It is fitting that this meeting is taking place in the margins of the inaugural health, relief, recovery, and Peace Day at COP28. The day on which we are highlighting the increasingly prevalent humanitarian impacts of climate change and seeking urgent solutions to address it.

During the 20 years of operation of IHC, we have seen an astonishing 800% increase in climate related humanitarian appeals. As I just highlighted, the IHC and other world humanitarian hubs have already played a crucial role in the quick and efficient response to any of these crises. As the frequency and

magnitude of extreme weather events increase, so will the demand for us to get humanitarian supplies quickly, efficiently, and simultaneously to crisis- struck countries.

As we seek to roll out more early warning capacity and take more action in anticipation of predicted crisis, so will the need for preparedness and effective supply management increase. That is why I welcome the further discussion today on the full implementation across the world humanitarian hub network of the IHC's Humanitarian Logistics Databank, an incredibly important resource that enhances effective supply chain management and enables the humanitarian community to accurately track the movement and availability of supplies.

I welcome further discussion on how the World Humanitarian Hubs can build on the IHC model and become centers of collaboration and innovation and can contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions in the storage and transportation of humanitarian aid. On a day when we are addressing the humanitarian impacts of climate change, it is important that humanitarians lead from the front when it comes environmental sustainability of our operations.

Excellencies, in a world facing myriad challenges impacting hundreds of millions of people, you are providing concrete solutions. You should rightly be incredibly proud of your contribution to humanitarian action worldwide, and we thank you for your service... thank you.

3- Sujit Kumar Mohanty,
Chief of Branch, Intergovernmental Processes,
Interagency Coordination and Partnerships, UNDRR

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am really honoured today to be here at this inaugural conference of the world humanitarian hubs, gratefully hosted by the government of the Dubai, UAE, during the sideline of COPS 28.

My sincere appreciation goes to the organizers for convening this pivotal platform bringing together global leaders, experts and practitioners in emergency relief operation, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

First of all, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to all the humanitarian organizations represented here, those who are tirelessly responding to the world's crises and disasters. Your dedicated support in providing relief and comfort to people is really commendable. The stark realities of the global landscape today characterized by disasters with profound impacts is known to all of us. In 2022 alone, disasters incurred losses of approximately 270 billion US dollars, and in the last two decades over 7000 disasters costing the world almost 3 trillion dollars in economic losses, and sadly the number is increasing. The review at the mid-term at the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction shows us that there is 80% increase in number of people affected world-wide since 2005. While the UN office for disaster risk reduction, where I belong, is not a relief agency, we stand in solidarity with you viewing the reduction of humanitarian needs as an objective of our work, our goal is to support countries in identifying and mitigating risks before they escalate into disasters. Events that inflict harm, displace populations, escalate humanitarian needs and hinder the achievement of the sustainable development goals and worsen the suffering

of those in conflict situations. This really underpins the importance of reducing disaster risk at the heart of humanitarian development and peace building nexus. While we all are committed to humanitarian support, which is a profound work being done by all of you to support communities in need, we have to also work together in breaking the cycle of disaster response, relief, recovery and repeat with more disasters. We have to collectively work on minimizing the impact of hazards which are increasing and make sure these hazards are not turning into disasters. We advocate for no natural disasters, while hazards such as floods, earthquakes, cyclones are natural phenomena, they are not necessarily disasters if we have proper planning, proper way of dealing with these risks are there, and we really need to look at the increasing vulnerability, exposure and risk to minimize the humanitarian suffering in the whole world.

The world Humanitarian Hubs really provide a platform not only for dialogue but also for a concrete action. It is heartening to witness the commitments of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Humanitarian City, and other partners toward creating an impactful change.

Today, I commend the initiative undertaken by the government of Dubai, The Dubai Call for Action for Strengthening Urban Resilience for Changing Climate. This call stands out of the Global Resilience Forum which was held in October this year in Dubai. It really showcases Dubai's commitment to driving change in the face of urban challenges, in the face of exasperating climate change. What make this call even more commendable is its inclusive approach engaging local communities to ensure effective and diverse solutions, the collaborative effort resonates with the COP28, where the voices of local communities play a pivotal role in shaping the discussions and outcomes of the COP. The robust partnership with the government of the UAE through NEMA, the National Emergency Management Agency and the Dubai Government, especially in advancing the early warning for all initiatives, the urban resilience and so on, aiming to save lives at the urban

settings as well as bringing early warning to all in the least developed and the island countries. As we navigate these discussions today guided by the imperative to turn challenges into actions, let us portray innovative and collaborate strategies , our deliberations should not only acknowledge the challenges but should also talk about solutions which we can bring together collectively with all of you..

Thank you very much for this honour to be here and I look forward for an impactful discussion today.

Thank you very much.

4. HE Dr. Muawieh Khalid Radaideh,

Minister of Environment

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Good Morning.

Three concurrent sessions that I had to be at ... at the same time, and I could not clone myself, but I definitely wanted to be here with you today to make sure that the humanitarian hubs and what Jordan is doing in this regard is presented to you all. It is a pleasure being with you and please allow me to start by thanking the government of the United Arab Emirates for hosting COP28 and for the warm hospitality that the UAE has extended to all of us.

COP28 is off to a good start and we are excited about seeing the conclusion of this COP with great success . Our meeting today is not only timely but is a necessity. This meeting affirms the importance of the global initiative launched by Jordan at COP27 on the Climate-Refugee Nexus. The Initiative recognizes the urgency of prioritizing assistance to refugee-hosting countries that also suffer disproportionately from climate change. These pressures impact national resources, ecosystems, and infrastructure, which can impede the ability of these countries to meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Fifty-eight countries have supported the initiative so far, and we look forward to support from and collaboration with additional countries and international organizations.

Countries like Jordan – where refugees now represent a third of our population- make an immense contribution from their own limited resources to the collective good, often over extended time frames. It is imperative that Jordan and other host countries continue to receive tangible support, both on the adaptation and mitigation fronts.

It is also important to bear in mind that climate change impacts preparedness, the emergency response, the supply chain of humanitarian aid, and consequently, the crucial role of relief operations in host countries. The frequency of natural disasters is rising exponentially in the Middle East and North Africa Region, and Jordan is particularly susceptible to climate disasters like

flashfloods, landslides, and droughts, which stand to harm lives and livelihoods in an already vulnerable socioeconomic context. These impacts must be considered in the humanitarian response framework, including the carbon and ecological footprint.

Globally, more than 345 million people face food insecurity, daily hunger, or starvation; among the most vulnerable are 110 million refugees. And amidst the dramatically increasing global crises, not least of which is the crisis in Gaza, enhancing climate-responsive cooperation among humanitarian centers and agencies is urgently needed. Such cooperation is essential to ensure responses are *effective, efficient, and timely* when crises erupt.

Internal displacement - due to the impacts of climate change – places immense pressures on resident populations, particularly in cities. At the same time, hosting of significant refugee populations impacts the host country's carbon footprint, availability of resources, health of ecosystems, and quality of infrastructure and public services offered to refugees and host communities alike. Jordan recognizes that this presents an opportunity for innovation to introduce low-carbon, climate-resilient solutions; “greening” the humanitarian value chain – so to speak.

Jordan has implemented some successful solutions, such as the introduction of solar water heaters in hospitals, and low-cost insulation solutions and solar panels in refugee camps.

We applaud the International Humanitarian City's (IHC) Humanitarian Logistics Databank, as it is exactly the type of platform needed to share such success stories, and therefore enable the funneling of additional finance and support towards scaling up innovations from humanitarian hubs across the globe.

One such hub is the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), which is a multi-functional relief and humanitarian foundation established in 1990. The organization provides direct humanitarian aid to affected countries during and/or after conflict and natural disasters. The organization also coordinates and executes many activities with non-profit organizations and institutions that help disaster-stricken areas and refugees around the world. As highlighted by the IHC, partnerships and collaboration are essential in this space.

Data collection and sharing is also an imperative for the climate and humanitarian contexts. The National Centre for Security and Crisis Management (NCSCM), in collaboration with the WFP, launched the Platform for Realtime Impact and Situation Monitoring (PRISM) in 2021. This platform monitors and analyses potential risks and is designed to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of the national response to shocks, as well as preparedness for natural hazards such as drought and earthquakes.

In this context, it is important to engage all stakeholders in strengthening the humanitarian value chain and related climate response. This includes the private sector, with their ability to share knowledge of national and regional infrastructure and systems and invest resources in supply chain preparedness.

Please allow me at the end to seize this opportunity to urge the humanitarian hubs, together with the international community and Governments, to mobilize urgent support for Gaza and its people by facilitating a safe and continuous flow of aid convoys, opening additional crossing points for aid and commercial trucks to enter, expanding the number of safe shelters for displaced people within Gaza, and establishing and enabling the important work of relief distribution hubs.

We look forward to working with you all on both the urgent, and long-term priorities of climate-responsive humanitarian hubs.....Thank you

5. HE Prisheela Prakash,
Undersecretary of the Multilateral and Economic Division,
MOFA – Malaysi

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen

First and foremost, allow me to thank the United Arab Emirates for actually hosting this event in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of IHC. It is indeed a timely event given t the circumstances that we all gather and also to address the impact of climate change in terms of managing disaster- risk reduction as well as preparedness and response.

We also welcome IHC’s positive steps to build a network of information sharing with the humanitarian cities and hubs through the Humanitarian Logistics Databank. We recognize the crucial role of the logistics databank in the humanitarian supply chain, especially in disseminating real-time data sharing to better mitigate carbon emissions within humanitarian hubs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Malaysia is vulnerable to tropical storms, floods, landslides, and other climate-related disasters. Malaysia’s emergency preparedness and responses are significantly shaped by the recurring impact of extreme weather conditions. Recognizing the urgency to tackle climate change and mitigate natural hazards, Malaysia ratified the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction on 15 March 2015. Since then, Malaysia has pursued a holistic and inclusive disaster risk management policy.

The Government of Malaysia has taken several initiatives to strengthen the governance and institutional capacity of disaster risk reduction, which among others, include the following:

1. Establishing a National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) as the central coordinating agency for implementing national disaster risk reduction and management and reduction.

2. Incorporating disaster risk reduction in the 12th Malaysia Plan, by formulating the National Policy and Act on disaster risk reduction.
3. Developing a disaster resilient community through empowerment of disaster risk reduction management at all levels. And this also includes participation of women, children, youth and those with special needs in the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management programs.
4. Establishing a National Geology Disaster Centre to oversee the efficiency of early warning systems for tsunamis, floods, and landslides.
5. Establishing a National Risk Register and National Disaster Command Centre for timely and effective sharing of data among stakeholders and government agencies involved in disaster management.
6. Strengthening collaboration with various industry players and academia in developing a real-time data and information system to better enhance disaster planning and risk-informed decision-making.
7. Increased public investment in disaster risk reduction to ensure adequate and timely disbursement of funding for emergency situation, including disaster and public health crises; and:
8. Ensuring sufficient budget allocation for high-priority flood mitigation projects and to the National Disaster Aid Fund for the establishment of permanent flood relief centers.

Malaysia is pleased and honoured to be one of the ten hosting countries for the world humanitarian hubs. At present, Malaysia is hosting two humanitarian hubs, namely, the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) at the Royal Malaysian Air Base in Subang and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Asia-Pacific Logistics Hub in Port Klang. These humanitarian hubs facilitate timely, swift and coordinated responses to humanitarian challenges on a global scale.

Through the two humanitarian hubs, the Government of Malaysia continues to render its necessary humanitarian assistance, in both monetary and in-kind, to various parts of the countries affected by natural and mankind disasters.

In 2010, Malaysia established its first UNHRD in Asia to support emergency operations by World Food Program (WFP) and other agencies in the region and beyond. Since 2010, the Government of Malaysia has contributed USD 1 million annually to support the operating cost of the center. The depot, with 12,000 square meters of office and training facilities, plays a critical role in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and relief items.

As the world was grappling with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, UNHRD provided crucial support and assistance to key partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

UNHRD coordinated the delivery of health-related supplies and management of supply chain services ranging from procurement, storage and distribution of critical health supplies.

This depot also serves as a regional coordinating hub for the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA). The depot facilitates the prompt provision of essential relief items to ASEAN nations grappling with the aftermath of disasters. Through DELSA, the depot has been serving as a regional emergency stockpile, and also as a focal point for institutional capacity building. With the support of DELSA, the depot has successfully developed a robust communications strategy which raises awareness on disaster emergency logistics system.

Malaysia is also pleased to host the IFRC Asia-Pacific Logistics hub in Port Klang for almost 25 years. Malaysia's strategic location to major manufacturing hubs in China, India and Pakistan, has given Malaysia the advantage of becoming a regional gateway for IFRC Global Operations in the Asia Pacific region. In the last 10 years, IFRC hub in Port Klang has supported more than 100 Emergency Operations, with the stock capacity of sustaining 100,000 people.

Related to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, Malaysia expresses its deep concern and calls for unimpeded safe passage for humanitarian aid.

I am pleased to announce that Malaysia thus far has delivered a total of 36 tons of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians through the humanitarian hubs in Malaysia.

Malaysia remains committed to building a holistic and inclusive humanitarian response. In ensuring the timely and swift delivery of humanitarian aid, let us be mindful of the need for collective actions to protect our people and the planet from climate crisis. Together, we can make the change towards a greener, more peaceful world and sustainable environment.

Thank you.

**6. HE Rebecca Perez,
Ambassador of Panama to the UAE**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, ministers, representatives of humanitarian organizations, colleagues and friends. It is an honor for me to address you today as a representative of Panama, one of the host countries of the World Humanitarian Centers, at this first conference dedicated to this urgent topic.

The World Humanitarian Centers are a pioneering initiative that seek to facilitate and coordinate the collective action of the international humanitarian community for emergency responses to a growing number of crises around the world, especially those caused by climate change.

These centers are independent, non-profit humanitarian action authorities that host a variety of actors, such as United Nations organizations, non-profit organizations, nongovernmental organizations, commercial companies, innovators, academic institutions and industry actors and the private sector.

As we know, participating countries, in addition to the United Arab Emirates, include Panama, Spain, Ghana, Cameroon, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, China and Australia. Each of these countries has made its infrastructure, logistical capacity, experience, and commitment available to the humanitarian community to improve the preparation, referral and delivery of humanitarian aid in their respective regions.

As is known, climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, which threatens the life, dignity, and development of millions of people around the world. Climate change also has increased the frequency, intensity and complexity of emergencies, such as typhoons, heat waves, floods, hurricanes, droughts, forest fires and cyclones.

These emergencies test the response capacity of the affected countries and the humanitarian community, which must mobilize human, material, and financial resources quickly, efficiently, and effectively. In addition, climate change also affects the supply chain and mobilization of aid, making it difficult to access, transport and distribute essential lifesaving goods and services.

Given this scenario, the World Humanitarian Centers have a key role to play, by offering a space for coordination, cooperation and innovation for humanitarian action, with the intention to guarantee the immediate availability of aid in response to national and international emergencies.

The World Humanitarian Centers also contribute to climate change mitigation by promoting the use of practical technologies and platforms that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian cargo and the supply chain, reducing costs, carbon footprint and environmental impact of humanitarian operations.

However, we are also aware that there are still many challenges and gaps to be resolved, especially regarding financing, adaptation, transparency, and solidarity. I therefore invite you to seize this unique opportunity to debate and address the key policy issues that will enable us to unlock an ambitious and equitable COP 28 outcome on mitigation.

As the host country of the Regional Logistics Center for Humanitarian Assistance (CLRAH), I want to highlight Panama as a logistics platform for humanitarian assistance strengthened by the valuable knowledge acquired from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced us to reevaluate the process of delivering relief items to disaster-affected areas, emphasizing sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.

The CLRAH has been classified as a "Precinct of Good Humanitarian Practices" for its work during the humanitarian crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, becoming a reference point for the Latin American and Caribbean region, thus contributing to strengthening humanitarian assistance at a regional and global level. During this year, from January to October, almost 600 tons of humanitarian cargo have been moved through our International Users to 34 countries in the Region, representing more than 7 million US dollars. Our main challenge is to continue promoting the use of practical technologies and platforms that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian cargo and the supply chain to help reduce costs, reduce the carbon footprint and benefit the environment in a sustainable and renewable way.

With this purpose, we are excited to contribute by working on establishing ourselves as a humanitarian assistance logistics platform that allows the facilitation of the activities of reception, handling, storage and redistribution of supplies and equipment, as well as the mobilization of human resources, without prejudice to any other related activity, for efficient management of humanitarian assistance in the face of national and international emergencies.

Therefore, our vision is to develop a better dialogue between humanitarian actors, their strategic partners and new users through what we have called HUMANITARIAN ECOSYSTEM, green and circular logistics, seeking sustainability in the development of infrastructure that further improves the preparation, referral and delivery provided by national and international response authorities in the region.

I would like to invite you to continue working together for more agile, effective, and sustainable humanitarian assistance for all regions. Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight the support given for all collaboration and international organizations that have made possible the establishment of the regional Logistics Center for Humanitarian assistance.

Thank you very much.

7. HE Carlo Batori,

Italian Minister Plenipotentiary of the Directorate General

Head of the Taskforce for Climate Finance and Digital for

for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dear Friends, first I would like to express our gratitude to the government of the UAE, our kind host, and to the International Humanitarian City for organizing this conference at such a crucial time. As has been signaled by previous speakers, we all see that extreme weather events are increasing, compounding countries' existing vulnerabilities and aggravating humanitarian crises. This is why it is pivotal for our humanitarian response to improve prevention and preparedness measures to climate change and natural disasters.

Ensuring a rapid and efficient humanitarian aid mobilization is a key component of our response to crises and natural disasters. At the same time, we are aware that the storage and transportation of humanitarian aid has implications in terms of carbon emissions, as has been said by H E Reem Al Hashimy earlier.

This is why we are supporting the efforts of the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot located in Brindisi, Italy, aimed at incorporating green technologies in their logistic support. More specifically, the Brindisi Hub has set up a research and development unit which is exploring innovative projects and equipment, with a specific attention to reducing waste in relief item packaging.

Another aspect which deserves particular attention is the application of new technologies and digital instruments to the humanitarian supply chain. Here again, I would like to highlight the

ongoing efforts of the Brindisi Hub, which has created a specific Unit for the development of new digital solutions for their systems and tools.

Throughout these initiatives, we believe it is important to promote wide partnerships and a fruitful sharing of knowledge and experiences. In this spirit, we are happy to further explore the possibility of using IHC's Humanitarian Logistics Databank which Brindisi is already attached to.

In its research and development efforts, the Brindisi Hub can count on a variety of relevant expertise, including logistic field experts, engineers, industrial designers and others. At the same time the Hub is engaging with a wide variety of actors - research centers, suppliers, universities, and government agencies. On the same line, the Italian Cooperation is exploring new ways of including the private sector in its development and humanitarian strategies, benefitting from their expertise, know-how values and potential additional resources.

I would also like to stress that a more cost-efficient humanitarian aid mobilization can greatly contribute to addressing the humanitarian funding gap. This is in line with the ongoing efforts of key actors such as DG ECHO which has underlined the importance of improving logistics in order to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and reduce the associated costs.

We believe that the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) is a great operational tool which can offer lessons learned in terms of the coordination of aid mobilization and the provision of logistic support to partners.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our interest and support for sharing relevant lessons learned and good practices with the other countries hosting humanitarian hubs. We are ready to reinforce our partnership and contribute all together to a more sustainable and cost-efficient humanitarian supply chain.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues, humanitarian action is one of the many multi-faceted efforts of the international community but is not only providing relief to vulnerable groups and individuals. It is an investment in human dignity, an investment which is long-term, an investment which is paying off.

Thank you

8. Ms. Blanca Yanez,
Director of Multilateral Cooperation of
The Agency for International Cooperation and Development of Spain
AECID

Excellencies, distinguished guests, good morning everyone...

Let me start by explaining the base of Las Palmas Center that we have in Spain. Since 2012, Spain has hosted The Humanitarian Response Logistics Days of the World Food Program (WFP) in Las Palmas in the Canary Islands.

The base is original humanitarian hub that responds to emergencies and development programs in North African countries. In total, the food shipments from the base since its establishment amount to 311,000 tones.

One of the main achievements of the base that it has managed to reduce the average delivery time by 73% becoming a fundamental platform when responding to crisis situation, such as the Ebola epidemic in 2014 or the emergency in Nigeria in 2016/2017. The Center's added value lies in the good connection of Port of Las Palmas with the coastal countries of West Africa and its favorable climatic conditions, which allowed the three warehouses donated by the government of Spain to store key WFP commodities for longer periods of time with minimal losses.

The Las Palmas base provides a response to both planned and unplanned needs. The base, for example, recently received 4000 tons of food from the U.S. for the treatment of child malnutrition which will be available to meet needs at any time. Thanks to the platform's integration with the WFP global food management facility, its performance has increased considerably, and on these lines, WFP West Africa offices have requested that all their international food processes go through the hub. In September 2023, the Las Palmas base received the first 100% electric vehicle in the WFP fleet, in line with its commitments to reduce the carbon footprint which supports also the other initiatives such as promoting local Pallet production.

Key elements we need to consider for the reduction of the carbon footprint include:

1. The potential benefits of sharing logistic resources between partners including pole transport and procurement of goods and services and joint warehouses in humanitarian hubs.
2. Cycle analysis and procurement of environmentally- friendly humanitarian items, including an identification of locally produced goods.
3. Environmental requirements for contractors and vendors.
4. planning of procurement to reduce air shipments of goods and items, verses sea shipments and land transport. Also, evaluation of potential local procurement when possible.
5. The use of optimal transport routes and appropriate vehicles for each type of use to reduce the consumption of fossil energy.
6. the need of adequate fleet management and maintenance.
7. Minimal use of fossil energy resources in warehouses and field offices.
8. Strengthening of capacity of local response teams, which can reduce the need of deployment of international teams.

Now let us talk about climate change and humanitarian emergency preparedness and response of the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation.

We adopted with a guide for mainstreaming environment into humanitarian action and emergency dated 2021. The goal of this document is to incorporate environmental aspects into Spanish agency humanitarian action and emergencies, avoid or reduce negative impact during operations, take advantage of opportunities offered by the environment, and promote the nexus approach.

The guide also includes references to tools related to departmental practices. The Humanitarian Action Office of the Spanish Agency is making increasing efforts towards the greening of its own humanitarian response capacities, specifically it has acquired the reusable packaging systems as well as electric machinery and its empty one hospital and wash operations aimed at being almost fully solar power depending on local conditions.

When feasible, Local purchases and pre-positioned items are preferred options as compared to shipments of humanitarian aid from other countries. Local purchases are mainly facilitated through our local corporation offices which amount to a total of 51, mainly Latin America, and Caribbean areas and also in Africa.

An analysis of optimal routes is performed routinely for the shipment of humanitarian aid. AECID has prepositioned goods into facilities, one in a warehouse in an area near Madrid, and another one at the UNHRD depot in Panama.

Palletization of goods is performed aimed at fully loaded vehicles. Also AECID has performed and participated in a pool AECID shipments coordinated by Land and Sea Transport are preferred options where feasible and in case of the deployment of the field hospital even though the deployment by air is a priority given the time constraints, the return to the cargo warehouse in Madrid is by planned by land or by sea.

Finally, to most relevant pending issues from our side, is the analysis of the products life cycle and also the impact emergency response operations performed by our partners of AECID

Many thanks

9. Mr. Tirlamo Norbert Wirnkar,
First Vice Consul, Consulate General of Cameroon in Dubai

Good day everyone,

Thank you very much to the IHC and the UAE for organizing this very important event. I would like to start by appreciating the efforts that have been done by the institutions in managing the humanitarian centers which are spread around the world. So the advantage of taking the floor as the last position may be either resume what has been said or actually it simplifies the task as everything has been said by the previous speakers.

What I am going to do now, I am just going to share the experience of Cameroon... which host of the humanitarian centers in Douala. Cameroon in the last few year has become a major hosting country for refugees. Cameroon in fact hosts close to a million refugees originate from African countries and the majority originate from Central Africa Republic and Nigeria, and to efficiently respond to these humanitarian emergencies in Cameroon and in the south region,

Most of the humanitarian agencies like the UNHCR, the World Food Program, The International Committee of the Red Cross established humanitarian logistics centers in the port city of Douala. From this location, very crucial live-saving supplies and logistics are conveyed to different regions experiencing emergencies within Cameroon and the south region, mostly in the Central Africa Republic, Chad, and lately Sudan with the crisis there.

These logistics centers have common hand in organizing emergency response. During crisis caused by climate fluctuation and human induced conflicts within the region, these humanitarian hubs, despite the difficulties related to the decrease in funding as most of the crises in the region are protracted. we talk about Central Africa crisis which has been going on close to 15 years.

With these protracted nature of the crisis, the funding tends to decrease as more funding goes to most recent crisis outside, such as the cases in Ukraine and lately Palestine. The supply chain of humanitarian assistance from the Douala hub, equally conscious of climatic footprint in the transportation of humanitarian logistics zones affected by emergencies and measures have been taken by the government and humanitarian actors have been working together to mitigate and

reduce the carbon emissions which occur from the storage and transportation of humanitarian supplies to the various regions which are hit by humanitarian emergencies.

So, the Cameroon Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is currently working on making the humanitarian stores greener and less polluting. Equally in June 2023, an interministerial task force was set up to reflect on ways to efficiently convey humanitarian aid with the least effects on the climate.

So, in a nutshell, the humanitarian hub which is located in Douala is conscious of the very important role played by this center especially as being the lone center amidst many countries affected by conflicts which are either political or environmental. So it is quite difficult for a country like Cameroon cope with its humanitarian difficulties, climatic in the northern part of the country and politically induced in the north western and south western regions, including the crisis which popped up recently in Sudan, in the Central African Republic and in the ongoing Boko Haram in crisis Nigeria.

So you can understand that the stocks and those running the humanitarian hubs are stretched, because the needy groups are constantly increasing and the stocks do not catch up with the needs.

So it is a call from the Government of Cameroon for international solidarity when it comes to assisting those needy and the stock should be made available constantly to make sure that those in need are being assisted.

So I would like to thank you very much .. The UAE and the International Humanitarian City for hosting this conference and we hope to have many others will bring hosting countries together to discuss the difficulties which not only concerns climate change but equally the other logistical difficulties which might be faced by humanitarian hubs.

10. Closing remarks by HE Abdulla Al Shaibani,

on behalf of the IHC Board of Directors – delivered in Arabic:

“Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of His Excellency Mohammad al Shaibani, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Humanitarian City, I am honored to bring the First Conference for Hosting Countries of the World’s Humanitarian Hubs to a close.

Allow me to commence my closing remarks by acknowledging the role of the hosting countries as well as the humanitarian organizations operating within the Hubs, commending them as pioneers in emergency preparedness and response action within the international humanitarian community.

These hosting countries were trailblazers when, years ago, they introduced the innovative concept of a "common house". Countries including Italy, UAE, Malaysia, Ghana, Spain, Panama, Australia, Jordan, Kenya, Cameroon, and more recently, China, supporting WFP in Covid operations, embraced this idea. Each hub developed novel approaches while adhering to the same roots: collaborative efforts and the use of common houses, thereby aligning with the 17th Sustainable Development Goal of Partnership.

We’re convening today, in this Conference, where all hosting countries once again assume the role of pioneers in a new endeavor: connecting themselves in a network of “sister hubs”, undoubtedly leading to a new mature and effective mechanism for humanitarian preparedness and response to emergencies.

The world is at a critical moment requiring collaborative efforts. Timely actions are equally crucial.

The spirit of collaboration and unity behind the establishment of a “common house” is the only feasible approach. Working in silos benefits nobody: neither international humanitarian organizations nor NGOs or Governments. The hosting countries of the world’s humanitarian hubs have demonstrated their awareness of this, emphasizing the need for all humanitarian organizations and the entire world to adopt this approach.

While this Conference serves as a booster towards a new direction, it marks just the beginning. To truly elevate humanitarian preparedness and response to a new level, the journey must continue along the path drawn today, both at a diplomatic level and at a technical level.

Therefore, it is hoped that this Conference will become a yearly fixed appointment on the agenda and hosted on rotation by each country ensuring that the dialogue on technical matters, such as stock digitalization and information-sharing, continues at the concerned level.

Dubai International Humanitarian City in the UAE initiated the digitalization of humanitarian stock in order to promptly provide affected countries and the Emergency Relief Coordinator with the same updated data simultaneously at the immediate outset of an emergency. Continuing this technical dialogue among all the hosting countries is critical.

The accomplishments of UAE, Ghana, Italy, Jordan, Malaysia, and Panama with the Humanitarian Databank must be expanded to other countries, aiming for visible progress by the next Conference in 2024.

The impact of climate change on increasing natural disasters and intensifying humanitarian emergencies operations was highlighted today as a reason for the first Conference to take place at the margins of COP28.

The International Humanitarian City of Dubai in the UAE remains committed to support the efforts of the international community in responding to the growing number of humanitarian emergencies. The focus will also extend towards initiatives aimed at promoting disaster risk reduction and reducing the impact of humanitarian activities on the environment. In this context, and in the creation of the network of cities and hubs, IHC Dubai will consider any efforts in this direction, including operating from the hub closest to the affected area.

In line with these objectives, IHC Dubai will persist in working to reduce carbon emissions in our facilities and meticulously tracking these emissions, including those related to the operations conducted from here.

Partnering is one of the key goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is the one determining the methodology that needs to be implemented to bring the sustainable development goals to life.

Effective preparedness and response action can only be achieved if the humanitarian organizations, the private sector, academia, and host countries work together, united toward the same objective. As a representative of one of the host countries, allow me to emphasize this consideration, particularly to ourselves. We, the hosting countries, must become active actors in this new level of partnership. Merely providing space, facilities, or financing for hub activities is not enough; we must be an integral part of the network: a network of cities and hubs that will become the world's safety net.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude these remarks by expressing, on behalf of the Chairman and the full board of directors of the Dubai International Humanitarian City, our sincere gratitude for attending this first Conference. IHC remains committed to continuing the dialogue and will liaise with all of you to support the preparation of the next Conference.”

End of Closing Remarks of HE Abdulla Al Shaibani

The event was moderated by HE Ambassador Gerhard Putman-Cramer, PAM Permanent Observer to the UN Geneva and CEO of DIHAD Sustainable Humanitarian Foundation. At the end, he concluded with: we heard the voices of humanitarian hubs and said that any effort should also look at the sustainable humanitarian chain. He also announced that IHC and partners have promoted a second event towards a sustainable humanitarian supply chain.

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