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UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE CHEF DE CABINET OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr. Egeland's briefing to the Security Council

~~Secretary-General,~~

Please find attached the final version (as delivered) of Mr. Egeland's briefing to the Security Council this morning.

Kindly note that DPA and DPKO were fully consulted on the text, both at the working and the principals levels. The change on page 6 (in bold) reflects suggestions made by Mr. Gambari. I will still check with Mr. Egeland that the proposed steps to be taken by the Governments of DRC, Uganda and Sudan have been reviewed with DPA and DPKO.

Thank you.

19 December 2005

Noted.
Frankie
~~AK~~ 19/12

MTJn . MARK MALLOCH BROWN

LOCHA

Statement by Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Mr. President, distinguished members of the Security Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on several major challenges the humanitarian community faces in Africa at the moment, all of which have considerable regional implications.

Darfur and Chad

I will start with what continues to be the largest humanitarian operation in the world, the crisis in Darfur, as well as its impact on neighboring Chad.

The humanitarian operation launched in late 2003 has been remarkably effective this year, against overwhelming odds. Some 13,000 international and national relief workers have been providing relief to more than 3 million people in Darfur and Chad. The success of their work can be measured in the thousands of lives saved, as mortality rates among the displaced have dropped by two thirds over the past year. I want to pay tribute to the heroic work of these men and women. But we must realize that their work and lives are under constant threat, and our operations can now be disrupted completely by renewed conflict any day and anywhere in Darfur. We must be acutely aware that all that has been built up by the thousands of relief workers and hundreds of millions of dollars in donor contributions could be destroyed. We could be on the brink of losing this huge humanitarian operation.

In addition, no amount of humanitarian relief can provide what those threatened by the conflict have wanted most from day one: effective protection against violence of the most vicious kind, and the ability to return to their homes. Only an effective ceasefire, a political solution, and a strong international security presence can accomplish these objectives.

We have to face up to the terrible reality our colleagues on the ground are witnessing and reporting every day. The killings have not stopped. The rapes are continuing, as are the burning, looting and forced displacement which I first reported to you more than 20 months ago. For three consecutive months now, the situation has been deteriorating. We have had less humanitarian access during this period than at any other time since that first briefing in early April 2004. More than twenty thousand more people were displaced in the last few weeks alone. In a deeply worrying new development, IDP camps themselves are increasingly being attacked by militia.



The regional spillover effects of this crisis on Chad and the impact of Chadian groups crossing into West Darfur are also cause for great concern. Tensions between the 200,000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian host communities remain high. Attacks on innocent civilians by armed groups crossing from Sudan continue to be reported, including the massacre in Modaina on 26 of September, which this Council condemned. Only yesterday, it was reported that 100 people were killed in an attack on the town of Adra in eastern Chad. Equally worrying are the recent political and military developments in Chad, including the mounting tension with Sudan over Darfur. A further deterioration of the situation would pose a threat to ongoing relief operations to Sudanese refugees and could trigger a serious humanitarian crisis.

This Council has taken many important steps to address the crisis in Darfur. But unless these measures have a real impact on the ground, the wound will continue to bleed. And our massive humanitarian operation will not be sustainable unless we finally see commensurate efforts in the political and security areas. The next few weeks will be critical, both for the talks in Abuja and as the Security Council and the African Union deliberate on the next steps. We need an expanded and more effective security presence on the ground as soon as possible, a presence that can provide more effective protection and ultimately allow people to return to their homes. This expanded presence is needed whether or not the Abuja talks succeed. It cannot be right that we have twice as many humanitarian workers in Darfur as international security personnel. So I appeal to you very strongly to show the sense of urgency and determination needed to achieve the objectives identified in your resolutions, and to help bring this crisis to an end.

Humanitarian Impact of LRA Activities in South Sudan and Northern Uganda

The second issue I want to address, Mr. President, is the regional crisis caused by the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, Sudan, and, most recently, the DRC. In mid-September, a group of LRA fighters crossed from Sudan into north-eastern DRC. They remain in this border region, from where they threaten much of Western Equatoria. LRA attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers have escalated, severely undermining our ability to provide relief to millions of people, and disrupting the long awaited return of refugees to Southern Sudan. While the overall number of LRA combatants may not have increased, they have spread out over a larger area and now constitute a significant threat to regional security, with appalling consequences for several million people.

The specific impact of LRA activities on humanitarian operations has been as follows:

Northern Uganda

In northern Uganda, gains are being lost as security erodes. Access to the nearly 1.7 million IDPs encamped in the northern districts has decreased in the past three months. Recent violence has hampered assistance efforts and we have seen a shocking new tactic: the deliberate targeting of humanitarians. In October and November alone, five humanitarian workers were killed by LRA ambushes in Sudan and Uganda.

The UN can only access 18 of the 200 IDP camps in northern Uganda without military escorts. Although the World Food Programme is able to distribute food under heavily armed military escorts, many other organizations find fees for escorts prohibitively expensive, or do not use them on principle. The NGO Action Against Hunger has reported that 57 percent of IDPs in one area – or 480,000 people – were not accessible in November. Without access, the effects are predictable: increased mortality, rising exposure to human rights violations, and deepening vulnerability.

Life in the camps continues to be unacceptable. A recent joint Ministry of Health, WHO and NGO study indicated that crude and under-five mortality rates were more than double the emergency thresholds.

Access by IDPs to farming areas outside camps is extremely limited due to the movement restrictions imposed by the UPDF. Less than half the IDPs in Acholi districts can access land that is more than two kilometers outside of their camps, severely hampering their ability to produce their own food. At present, there is no prospect of a large scale return before the critical March planting season. Therefore, WFP will have to provide food aid to 1.5 million IDPs through 2006.

Given the conditions in the camps, it is not surprising that many LRA combatants remain in the bush. We have not done enough to create the “pull factor” that could draw more of the LRA to disarmament and reintegration programmes. Those who have come in have found few chances to live a safe and productive life. We must dramatically expand our programmes for reintegration in order to give hope to those who still see fighting as a better option.

Southern Sudan

Mr. President,

The LRA is also wreaking havoc in the Equatorias in Southern Sudan. Dozens of civilians have been killed since the LRA crossed the Nile in mid-September, and over one hundred people, including children, have been abducted, many of whom have not returned.

The impact on our humanitarian operations has been dramatic. After three NGO staff were killed, large parts of the Equatorias in Southern Sudan have become inaccessible. In Central Equatoria, international NGO staff withdrew and critical health programmes in rural areas have been curtailed. In Western Equatoria, a UNICEF led measles campaign has been disrupted, and only covered 10 percent of the targeted population. Some 180 primary health care facilities in Central and Eastern Equatoria are currently inaccessible to UNICEF and NGO partners.

The LRA attacks have also severely hampered the preparation for the return of refugees from DRC, Central African Republic and Uganda. Many recovery projects to support the returnees had to be suspended for now, including hospitals and water points. As long as there is a significant LRA presence in the DRC/Sudan border area, it is difficult to imagine when refugees can start returning to Central or Western Equatoria, areas that previously were among the safest in Southern Sudan. This has clear consequences for efforts to rebuild and stabilize this important region.

Proposed Steps

Mr. President,

Much more needs to be done to address the threats and conditions I have just described. The governments of Uganda, DRC and Sudan bear the primary responsibility to protect and assist their populations, as well as to pursue the LRA. Unfortunately, their actions so far have not prevented the LRA from causing the devastation I have just described. The LRA continues to maintain bases and moves relatively freely throughout the region. A relatively small number of fighters is threatening a huge area and millions of people.

I would like to suggest a number of steps the Governments in the region and this Council could take:

It is of utmost importance that the three Governments concerned fully acknowledge how dangerous the situation has become for civilians and

humanitarian workers, and that they do whatever they can to protect their citizens, secure access for relief workers and promote regional solutions.

As I noted in my recent briefing to you on the protection of civilians, efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in northern Uganda must be strengthened through an internationally supported process. And the UN must actively contribute to this effort.

While I welcome steps taken by the Government of Uganda to operationalize the National IDP Policy, more should be done by the Government and its army and police to assume full responsibility for the protection of their civilian population. More must also be invested in the provision of basic services in the affected areas.

The Security Council should pay close attention to the regional dimension of this crisis and the threats to humanitarian work, and could consider as the Security Council several potential steps:

- The Council should strongly condemn the LRA's attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers. The Council should insist on an immediate cessation of violence and of all support to the LRA from all sources.
- To help the Council consider further steps and improve its understanding of the LRA, it could consider appointing a panel of experts. Such a panel could explore the sources of funding and support for the LRA and work with the three affected Governments and other parties to determine how this Council could most effectively contribute to reducing the threat emanating from the LRA.
- The Council could request regular updates on the effects on the LRA's activities on the region.

I also hope that in their reports to the Council, UNMIS and MONUC can indicate what else they can do, within their mandates, to provide security to relief workers and help create the necessary conditions for the return of refugees and IDPs.

Southern Africa

Finally, Mr. President, I have just returned from Zimbabwe and South Africa. As I reported to you in April, the humanitarian situation in the sub-region is already very serious, due to severe food insecurity, widespread HIV/AIDS and inadequate basic services. More than ten million people in the region are in need of food assistance. The situation could deteriorate further in 2006 and beyond, particularly in Zimbabwe and Malawi, unless actions are taken to meet immediate needs and to reverse the decline in key sectors.

In Zimbabwe, the humanitarian situation has worsened significantly in 2005. More than three million people – almost one third of the population – will receive food through World Food Programme in January and even more will receive assistance come April. Annual maize production, the basic staple, is one third of what it was several years ago. Basic services continue to deteriorate, particularly in the health, water and sanitation sectors. Inflation currently reaches over 500 percent. In this context, and as I told the Government in my meetings in Harare, the massive urban eviction campaign of hundreds of thousands of people was “the worst possible action, at the worst possible time”.

We are now entering the peak of the “lean season.” Food prices are rising fast, placing some basic commodities out of reach for a growing portion of the population. I welcome the Memorandum of Understanding finalized by the Government and WFP, which will ensure these emergency needs are met, and I also hope it will lead to better collaboration between the Government and the humanitarian agencies in other sectors.

Yet we much recognize that this huge need for food assistance is symbolic of the vicious cycle that we are caught in. It was raining when I was leaving Zimbabwe, but all expected that next year’s harvest would be poor because of a lack of skilled agricultural labor force, the devastating toll of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, counterproductive agricultural policies and practices, and a lack of inputs such as fertilizer, seeds and tools. **It is not sustainable to provide food assistance for millions of people year after year without making the necessary investments to get out of this situation. We can have a new approach that again will provide food security for all Zimbabweans. This will require major efforts from all, nationally as well as internationally. There is no substitute for engagement and dialogue at all levels in order to address the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.**

From my discussions with the Government of Zimbabwe, I am convinced that the UN and the humanitarian community at large must try to engage more actively with the Government to address the enormous humanitarian crisis. We did reach agreement on some issues during my mission: a more active and systematic dialogue on food security; a more hands-on approach to resolving bureaucratic problems for humanitarian organizations through “one-stop-shops” at both the Government and the UN; and the initiation of a shelter programme for households affected by the eviction campaign.

However, sustained progress will require the following:

- The Government must stop further evictions and be more flexible in allowing shelter and other programmes for those affected. It must ensure that beneficiaries are assisted solely on the basis of need.
- The UN and our humanitarian partners, as well as the donors, should be guided in their own response by the needs of the population. We should

provide the appropriate level of assistance where and when we identify the needs. Beyond food aid, we need to invest in food security, livelihoods and basic services.

- The Governments in the region and Africa at large should engage more proactively with Zimbabwe to find constructive solutions, also given their interdependence and the risks of increased migratory movements.
- All parties must understand the importance of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.

Mr. President,

More is currently at stake in terms of lives saved or lives lost in Africa than on any other continent. At the same time, there is great hope and opportunity given the forward looking initiatives of the African Union and the sub-regional organizations. Also, the G8 countries and other donors have pledged more resources for Africa than at any other time. In this coming year, we must and can see change.

As humanitarian workers, we cannot accept that so many lives are lost every year on this continent to preventable diseases, neglect and senseless brutality. We cannot accept that low levels of funding impede our operations in so many places. We must demonstrate our humanity by responding equally to the needs of those affected, whether they are families returning home to Southern Sudan, young men and women looking for a future beyond the IDP camps of northern Uganda, or AIDS patients trying to sustain their families through a drought in Zimbabwe. I call upon all member states to live up to their commitments to fund, support and facilitate a much more ambitious development and humanitarian agenda.

And finally, we must recognize that too many of these humanitarian crises result from a total absence of peace and security. Humanitarian aid cannot be an alibi for an unwillingness to address the root causes of conflict. The greatest contribution we can make to addressing humanitarian crises in Africa is determined, energetic and sustained efforts to bring an end to conflict and injustice that cause so much suffering in Africa.

Thank you Mr. President.

Please ask Jan
to send to EOSC
his brief before
his appearance
~~before~~^{up} the council

DPA / DPKO to review as
well.



Martine Therer/NY/UNO
16/12/2005 06:56 PM

To Angele Makombo/DPA/NY/UNO,
cc Carlos Lopes/NY/UNO, Kyoko Shiotani/NY/UNO, Elpida
Rouka/NY/UNO,
bcc

Subject Fw: Jan Egeland's briefing in the Security Council

Angele,

I checked with MMB. The briefing will not only cover Zimbabwe. It will be a general humanitarian briefing, which will cover other situations as well. That is why MMB would like DPKO to review it as well.

Thank you,
Martine

----- Forwarded by Martine Therer/NY/UNO on 16/12/2005 06:56 PM -----



Martine Therer/NY/UNO
16/12/2005 04:18 PM

To Angele Makombo/DPA/NY/UNO
cc Carlos Lopes/NY/UNO@UNHQ

Subject Re: Jan Egeland's briefing in the Security Council

Thank you.

Angele Makombo/DPA/NY/UNO

Angele
Makombo/DPA/NY/UNO
16/12/2005 04:16 PM

To Martine Therer/NY/UNO@UNHQ
cc Carlos Lopes/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Subject Re: Jan Egeland's briefing in the Security Council

I will.

Martine Therer/NY/UNO



Martine Therer/NY/UNO
16/12/2005 03:38 PM

To Angele Makombo/DPA/NY/UNO@UNHQ
cc Carlos Lopes/NY/UNO@UNHQ

Subject Jan Egeland's briefing in the Security Council

Angele,

The SG has asked that Jan Egeland sends to EOSG his brief before his appearance in the Security

Council. MMB wants DPA and DPKO to review the brief as well. Will you convey the message to Jan Egeland or do you want me to do it?

Thank you,

Martine

Meeting of the Security Council on 19 December 2005

Statement by Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and
Emergency Relief Coordinator

Mr. President, distinguished members of the Security Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on several major challenges the humanitarian community faces in Africa at the moment, all of which have considerable regional implications.

Darfur and Chad

I will start with what continues to be the largest humanitarian operation in the world, the crisis in Darfur, as well as its impact on neighboring Chad.

The humanitarian operation launched in late 2003 has been remarkably effective this year, against overwhelming odds. Some 13,000 international and national relief workers have been providing relief to more than 3 million people in Darfur and Chad. The success of their work can be measured in the thousands of lives saved, as mortality rates among the displaced have dropped by two thirds over the past year. I want to pay tribute to the heroic work of these men and women. But their work and lives are under constant threat, and our operations can now be disrupted completely any day and anywhere in Darfur.

No amount of humanitarian relief can provide what those threatened by the conflict have wanted most from day one: effective protection against violence of the most vicious kind, and the ability to return to their homes. Only an effective ceasefire, a political solution, and a strong international security presence can accomplish these objectives.

We have to face up to the terrible reality our colleagues on the ground are witnessing every day. The killings have not stopped. The rapes are continuing, as are the burning, looting and forced displacement which I first reported to you more than 20 months ago. For three consecutive months now, the situation has been deteriorating. We have had less humanitarian access during this period than at any other time since that first briefing. More than twenty thousand more people were displaced in the last few weeks alone. In a deeply worrying new development, IDP camps themselves are increasingly being attacked by militia.

The spillover effects of this crisis on Chad and the impact of Chadian groups crossing into West Darfur are also cause for great concern. Tensions between the 200,000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian host communities remain high. Attacks on innocent civilians by armed groups crossing from Sudan continue to be reported, including the massacre in Modaina on 26 September, which this Council condemned. Equally worrying are the recent political and military developments in Chad, including

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SG OFFICE
#4085 16 Dec.

the mounting tension with Sudan over Darfur. A further deterioration of the situation would pose a threat to ongoing relief operations to Sudanese refugees and could trigger a serious humanitarian crisis.

This Council has taken many important steps to address the crisis in Darfur. But unless these measures have a real impact on the ground, the wound will continue to bleed. And our massive humanitarian operation will not be sustainable unless we finally see commensurate efforts in the political and security areas. The next few weeks will be critical, both for the talks in Abuja and as the Security Council and the African Union deliberate on the next steps. We need an expanded and more effective security presence on the ground as soon as possible, a presence that can provide more effective protection and ultimately allow people to return to their homes. This expanded presence is needed whether or not the Abuja talks succeed. It cannot be right that we have twice as many humanitarian workers in Darfur as international security personnel. So I appeal to you very strongly to show the sense of urgency and determination needed to achieve the objectives identified in your resolutions, and to help bring this crisis to an end.

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The second issue I want to address is the regional crisis caused by the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, Sudan, and, most recently, the DRC. In mid-September, a group of LRA fighters crossed from Sudan into north-eastern DRC. They remain in this border region, from where they threaten much of Western Equatoria. LRA attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers have escalated, severely undermining our ability to provide relief to millions of people, and disrupting the long awaited return of refugees to Southern Sudan. While the overall number of LRA combatants may not have increased, they have spread out over a larger area and now constitute a significant threat to regional security, with appalling consequences for several million people.

The specific impact of LRA activities on humanitarian operations has been as follows:

Northern Uganda

In northern Uganda, gains are being lost as security erodes. Access to the nearly 1.7 million IDPs encamped in the northern districts has decreased in the past three months. Recent violence has hampered assistance efforts and we have seen a shocking new tactic: the deliberate targeting of humanitarians. In October and November alone, five humanitarians were killed by LRA ambushes in Sudan and Uganda.

The UN can only access 18 of the 200 IDP camps in northern Uganda without military escorts. Although the World Food Programme is able to distribute food under heavily armed military escorts, many other organizations find fees for escorts prohibitively expensive, or do not use them on principle. The NGO Action Against Hunger has reported that 57 percent of IDPs in one area – or 480,000 people – were not

accessible in November. Without access, the effects are predictable: increased mortality, rising exposure to human rights violations, and deepening vulnerability.

Life in the camps continues to be unacceptable. A recent joint Ministry of Health, WHO and NGO study indicated that crude and under-five mortality rates were more than double the emergency thresholds.

Access by IDPs to farming areas outside camps is extremely limited due to movement restrictions imposed by the UPDF. Less than half the IDPs in Acholi districts can access land that is more than two kilometers outside of their camps, severely hampering their ability to produce their own food. At present, there is no prospect of a large scale return before the critical March planting season. Therefore, WFP will have to provide food aid to 1.5 million IDPs through 2006.

Given the conditions in the camps, it is not surprising that many LRA combatants remain in the bush. We have not done enough to create the "pull factor" that could draw more of the LRA to disarmament and reintegration programmes. Those who have come in have found few chances to live a safe and productive life. We must dramatically expand our programmes in order to give hope to those who still see fighting as a better option.

Southern Sudan

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The LRA attacks have also severely hampered the preparation for the return of refugees from DRC, Central African Republic and Uganda. Many recovery projects to support the returnees had to be suspended for now, including hospitals and water points. As long as there is a significant LRA presence in the DRC/Sudan border area, it is difficult to imagine when refugees can start returning to Central or Western Equatoria, areas that previously were among the safest in Southern Sudan. This has clear consequences for efforts to rebuild and stabilize this region.

URGENT

MMB/JE

DRAFT 5 (16/12/05; 19:00)

Proposed Steps

Mr. President,

The proposed steps must be reviewed with DPA/DPKO. I would like to see the final draft.

Much more needs to be done to address the threats and conditions I have just described. The governments of Uganda, DRC and Sudan bear the primary responsibility to protect and assist their populations, as well as to pursue the LRA. Unfortunately, their actions so far have not prevented the LRA from causing the devastation I have just described. The LRA continues to maintain bases and moves relatively freely throughout the region. A relatively small number of fighters is threatening a huge area and millions of people.

I would like to suggest a number of steps the Governments in the region and this Council could take:

It is of utmost importance that the three Governments concerned fully acknowledge how dangerous the situation has become for civilians and humanitarian workers, and that they do whatever they can to protect their citizens, secure access for relief workers and promote regional solutions.

As I noted in my recent briefing to you on the protection of civilians, efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in northern Uganda must be strengthened through an internationally supported process. The UN must actively contribute to this effort.

While I welcome steps taken by the Government of Uganda to operationalize the coordination mechanisms in the National IDP Policy, I would encourage it to do more to assume its responsibility for the protection of its citizens and invest in the provision of basic services in all affected areas.

The Security Council should pay close attention to the regional dimension of this crisis and the threats to humanitarian work, and could consider several potential steps:

- The Council should strongly condemn the LRA's attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers. The Council should insist on an immediate cessation of violence and of all support to the LRA from all sources.
- To help the Council consider further steps and improve its understanding of the LRA, the Council could consider appointing a panel of experts. Such a panel could explore the sources of funding and support for the LRA and work with the three affected Governments and other parties to determine how the Council could most effectively contribute to reducing the threat emanating from the LRA.
- The Council could request regular updates on the effects on the LRA's activities on the region.

consultation with DPA/DPKO

I also hope that in their reports to the Council, UNMIS and MONUC can indicate what else they can do, within their mandates, to provide security to relief workers and help create the necessary conditions for the return of refugees and IDPs.

Has this been discussed with JMG/DPKO. It's essential that this be done before briefing

Southern Africa

Finally, I have just returned from Zimbabwe and South Africa. As I reported to you in April, the humanitarian situation in the sub-region is already very serious, due to severe food insecurity, widespread HIV/AIDS and inadequate basic services. More than ten million people in the region are in need of food assistance. The situation could deteriorate in 2006, particularly in Zimbabwe and Malawi, unless actions are taken to meet immediate needs and to reverse the decline in key sectors.

In Zimbabwe, the humanitarian situation has worsened significantly in 2005. More than three million people – almost one third of the population – will receive food through WFP in January and more will receive assistance by April. Annual maize production, the basic staple, is one third of what it was several years ago. Basic services continue to deteriorate, particularly in the health, water and sanitation sectors. Inflation currently reaches over 500 percent. In this context, and as I told the Government in my meetings in Harare, the massive urban eviction campaign of hundreds of thousands of people was “the worst possible action, at the worst possible time”.

We are now entering the peak of the “lean season.” Food prices are rising fast, placing some commodities out of reach for a growing portion of the population. I welcome the Memorandum of Understanding finalized by the Government and WFP, which will ensure these emergency needs are met, and I also hope it will lead to better collaboration between the Government and the humanitarian agencies in other sectors.

Yet we much recognize that this huge need for food assistance is symbolic of the vicious cycle that we are caught in. It was raining when I left Zimbabwe, but all expected that next year’s harvest would be poor because of a lack of skilled agricultural labor force, counterproductive agricultural policies, and a lack of inputs such as fertilizer, seeds and tools. It is illogical to provide food assistance for millions of people year after year without making the necessary investments to get out of this situation. We need a new approach, and this will require major efforts from all of us. There is no substitute for engagement and dialogue at all levels in order to address the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe.

From my discussions with the Government of Zimbabwe, I am convinced that the UN and the humanitarian community at large must engage more actively with the Government. We did reach agreement on some issues during my mission: a more active and systematic dialogue on food security; a more hands-on approach to resolving bureaucratic problems for NGOs through “one-stop-shops” at both the Government and the UN; and the initiation of a shelter programme for households affected by the eviction campaign.

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- The UN and our humanitarian partners, as well as the donors, should be guided in their own response by the needs of the population. We should provide the appropriate level of assistance where and when we identify the needs. Beyond food aid, we need to invest in food security, livelihoods and basic services.
- Governments in the region and Africa at large should engage more proactively with Zimbabwe to find constructive solutions, also given their interdependence and the risks of increased migratory movements.
- All parties must understand the importance of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.

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And finally, we must recognize that too many of these humanitarian crises result from a total absence of peace and security. Humanitarian aid cannot be an alibi for unwillingness to address the root causes of conflict. The greatest contribution we can make to addressing humanitarian crises in Africa is determined, energetic and sustained efforts to bring an end to conflict and injustice that cause so much suffering in Africa.

Thank you Mr. President.